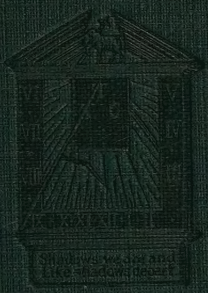

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Nitti, Francesco Saverio, 1868-1953.
They make a desert

THEY MAKE A DESERT

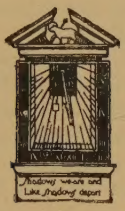
THEY MAKE A DESERT

BY

FRANCESCO NITTI

SOMETIME

PRIME MINISTER OF ITALY



TRANSLATED

FROM THE ITALIAN BY

F BRITTAIN B.A. CANTAB.

"Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant"

"They make a desert and call it peace"

TACITUS, *Agricola*, 30.

1924

LONDON & TORONTO

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TO MY WIFE, ANTONIA

Do you remember the anxieties and fears which you and I shared during the war? Whenever any of our family fell, we said to ourselves that each sacrifice would at least spare further bloodshed for those who were to come after us. Our eldest son, too, though little more than a boy, resolved to go to the war as a volunteer. After he had passed unscathed, as if by a miracle, through many battles, for a long time we thought him dead, when his regiment was wiped out in the bloody war-zone of Castagnevizza. We were still anxious about him, when we found he was wounded and a prisoner in Germany, in the hands of the enemy. Yet never did I see you shrink from your duty or hesitate before any sacrifice. Your kindness of heart conveyed your sweetness, and your zeal carried your goodness wherever it was needed by the suffering. You conveyed your help and succour to the very poorest, and the example of your calm bearing encouraged everyone to resistance.

But, after the war, when I became convinced that all those millions of men had been sacrificed in vain, that an even more detestable barbarism had taken the place of that which we detested and would not endure, when my mind was invaded by an overwhelming sadness, when I wished to fight with all my strength against the tremendous lie which is poisoning the life of the whole world, you encouraged me always with your smile. You have been my silent and noble colleague. You have worked for me even more than before, humbly and calmly, with a noble self-abnegation. It is to you that I owe the best of whatever I have done; to you that I owe the strength with which I have undertaken my work, and my unshakable faith.

I want your name to appear at the head of this book, which, more than any other, represents my ideas and embodies my beliefs. I want it to appear as a proof of the gratitude with which I look back on a life passed under a cloudless sky, in an atmosphere of truth and goodwill.

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

I AM very glad that this book is being published in English in the excellent translation by Mr. F. Brittain. It is the third and last of a series of three volumes written since I resigned the leadership of the Italian Government.

In the two previous volumes, *Peaceless Europe* and *The Decadence of Europe*, I foresaw the events which have since taken place, and foretold the harm which threatens Europe, including France herself, as a result of the French imperialistic policy. This policy is being pursued in the interests of the steel and iron trade, which desires the undisputed domination of the continent, and is arousing every kind of feeling and of prejudice. The process of dissolving the economy of Europe has already commenced, and, in spite of words of peace, new war-clouds are gathering over Europe, and new discontents and new hates are being aggravated.

Europe is too weary and too worn-out economically to wage fresh wars at once; but since 1919 she has done nothing but prepare for them. The authors of the Treaty of Versailles brought about chaos. Perhaps they considered that creation was born out of chaos; but in actual fact they have produced only chaos without creation.

This book is inspired by grief, and yet by sincerity. I could not hold my peace about anything which came within my knowledge, without failing in my duty as a statesman and a political leader.

I have been reproved, as has Lloyd George after me, for having revealed to the public facts and documents which were not intended for publication. The accusation is unjust, since our revelations were made after those of

Tardieu, Baker, Lansing, and many other politicians, who published much more serious documents in support of their theories. Further, it is not possible for a politician to retire from the government without being compelled, in the interests of truth and of the theories of which he is an exponent, to publish the proofs which are at his disposal—all the more so when the opposite side publish what fits in with their theories and yet frequently and deliberately ignore or mutilate what goes against them.

It is difficult to say who was responsible for the war. All were partly responsible, as Lloyd George has admitted. We drifted into war almost without being aware of it. The documents published at Moscow and Berlin, and also in neutral countries, put us in a position to assert that the attribution of the sole responsibility for the war to Germany and her allies by the Treaty of Versailles is historically a falsehood. We have now all the evidence necessary to determine the respective responsibilities of imperial Russia and Germany, and the action of France, in bringing about the conflict between the two great European combinations.

If it is difficult to say now who was responsible for the war, it is easy to say who was responsible for the peace, considered as a method of continuing the war. Every effort has been made to break Germany up and to crush her unity. These efforts have resulted in the ruin of the whole of Europe's economy, the creation of a Balkanised Europe, and the serious compromising of the position of the victors.

After six years of mistakes and blunders, the policy of the treaties, and the effort to use reparations as a method of destroying the vanquished, have utterly failed. The conquerors of Europe are constrained to renounce their whole programme, in order not to ruin themselves. The revision of the treaties will become inevitable, in spite of all declarations to the contrary.

Life itself is, for men of sense, a continual process of revision; and a deed which claimed to systematise the whole of Europe, but which succeeded only in undoing it, cannot escape revision. Moreover, facts themselves are every day taking up the task of revision.

In what way must this revision be accomplished? Is it possible that it will come without new and more formidable conflicts? Many symptoms of repentance have been made manifest, and many hopes of war-profiteers and reactionaries have fallen to the ground. The horizon, however, is still dark, and will not be cleared until fundamental truths are recognised, or so long as prejudice attributes the responsibility for the war to one side alone.

It is for these reasons that, in the interests of peace, I have endeavoured to contribute to the knowledge and dissemination of the truth. I am glad if my books and newspaper-articles, scattered throughout the world in many languages, have contributed to this objective.

This book, more than its predecessors, recapitulates my ideas and my proposals. It was written in the solitude of my villa at Acquafredda, on the Tyrrhenian Sea, during the summer of 1923. The last part has been rewritten in Switzerland, at Zurich, during September, 1924, giving an account of events which have recently taken place, especially the Conferences of London and Geneva.

When the Fascisti occupied Rome with an armed force in the autumn of 1922, and took possession of the government, I resolved not to take any further part in the sessions of Parliament, and not to recognise Fascismo as a lawful government. The leader of the Fascisti, who, until a few years ago, was a Communist and a revolutionary, when he assumed direction of the government declared his great contempt for Parliament, adding that the Chamber could sit for two months or two years, at its pleasure. He also repeatedly declared his aversion for

democracy, and celebrated the putrefaction of the corpse of liberty. Liberty of the press and of public meetings has been abolished in Italy, together with Parliamentary prerogatives. In November, 1923, my house at Rome was attacked and pillaged by Fascisti armed with bombs and revolvers, and at the orders of State officials. The authors of the crime are still unpunished, and for a long time were not even searched for. I have therefore determined not to recognise Fascismo as a government *de jure*, but merely as a government *de facto*; but I have resolved to abstain from attacking it, in order not to help to bring about a great revolutionary upheaval in Italy. I have preferred throughout this period to concentrate all my activities on the work of peace and the reconstruction of Europe, convinced that Italy will soon return to her traditions of democracy and liberty of her own free will. Fascismo has declared itself nationalist and imperialist—two things which are in reality mutually exclusive. Its imperialism, however, is rather an academic expression, seeing that it could only be employed at the expense of France, Britain and America—which is not only somewhat difficult, but also supremely ridiculous. The nationalism in question, too, is a stupid and perverse doctrine, the fruit of ignorance and prejudice. It is harmful to all nations and would be catastrophic for Italy, which has a small territory, a large population, and a scarcity of raw materials, and which therefore needs liberty, trade, and security of the international labour-market more than any other nation in Europe.

Some readers will perhaps find a tinge of pessimism in this book. No one, however, is more convinced than I that, after all the errors that have been committed, there will have to be a general revision of the past, and a preparation for the future (and perhaps not far distant) political federation of Europe through the medium of a customs-union between the various countries. We have

arrived at a point at which Europe will either have to continue with its past errors and collapse, or change its direction under the pressure of necessity and turn towards economic and political unions on a large scale. Many symptoms lead us to hope that this change of directions will come about.

These new forces of life must be fostered, and the elements of reaction and violence must be combated. This is the great task of the Anglo-Saxon peoples, who, as they were really the victors in the war, ought to feel an inestimable pride at being able to be the true victors of the peace by means of a decisive and unbroken policy.

But, in order that any reconstructive work may be possible, prejudices must be broken down, and the work of truth must be upheld, even at the cost of personal sacrifice.

NITTI.

Zurich, *September*, 1924.

INTRODUCTION

THE 10th of January, 1920, was a sad day for me. I was at Paris, and had to sign the ratification of the Peace of Versailles. I still remember the scene at the Quai d'Orsay, in the Salle de l'Horloge. It lasted barely thirteen minutes. The first act took place in the chambers of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, where Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Matsu (representing Japan) and I met together. The United States were not represented. Then William Martin, who had drafted the protocol, brought in the two representatives of Germany, Von Lesner and Von Simson. After a brief exchange of courtesies, Clemenceau announced that the text of the protocol agreed with that sent to the Germans on 2nd November, and requested them to sign. When they had done so, Clemenceau went up to them to give the symbolical hand-shake. All this lasted barely three minutes.

We then entered the Salle de l'Horloge, where there was a large gathering of politicians, foreign representatives, journalists, and onlookers. It was five minutes past four. On Clemenceau's right were the French representatives, then myself, and next to me Hymans (representative of Belgium), Venizelos (Prime Minister of Greece), and Pasisc (representative of Jugoslavia). On his left were Lloyd George, Bonar Law and Lord Curzon (representatives of Great Britain), and Matsu (Japanese ambassador at Paris). There were also many representatives of minor states.

After Clemenceau had requested the German representatives to sign—which they did, slowly and with a composed yet melancholy air—Lloyd George signed, then

Clemenceau, then I, next Matsu, and finally all the others. Clemenceau then got up and said: "The protocol of the ratification of the treaty concluded between the Entente and Germany has been signed. From this moment the treaty enters into force, and is to be executed in all its clauses. The session is over."

I left the room with Lloyd George and Curzon. Outside, there was great rejoicing, and the cries of newsboys were announcing the joyful event to the public. The treaty, Clemenceau had said, was to be executed in all its clauses. But how was it to be executed, when it was incapable of execution?

All the rejoicing in the street was utterly opposed to my own feelings. I sought peace and I heard around me nothing but violent proposals. It was the time of illusionment, when the public, taking its cue from the mouth of its rulers, believed that Germany had accepted servitude and had at the same time agreed to find the means to pay for the war and to enrich the victors.

When I assumed the headship of the Italian government in June, 1919, the first act which I was to have performed was to sign the Treaty of Versailles, on the 26th of the same month. I knew that detestable treaty thoroughly, by dint of a long study of it, and I considered it to be the ruin of Europe. I had taken no part in its preparation, and therefore was not responsible for it. I therefore asked Sonnino and his colleagues to sign it. The irony of fate willed that it should fall to my lot to sign the ratification of a treaty which I believed to be equally ruinous for both victors and vanquished, being based on violence, on bad faith, and on the spirit of plunder.

As Minister of Finance in the Orlando-Nitti-Sonnino Ministry which, after the disaster of Caporetto, carried Italy on to victory, I had had a most difficult task. After such a terrible military reverse, everything in

Italy stood in peril. At the beginning of November, 1917, I found in the Treasury nothing but a deficit of 242,000,000 *lire*, together with the necessity of reconstructing the artillery, the arms, and the munitions, and of providing for everything necessary to equip a large army and to restore confidence. At that very time, my mind was full of anxiety, because I thought that my eldest son, who had volunteered for the war when only seventeen years old, was dead. The whole of his regiment had been cut to pieces, and it was not until two months later that, in the house of a French Minister at Paris, I found that he had been wounded and was a prisoner of war in Germany. I worked with all my might, I used all possible financial resources, I reconstructed the whole of the production of war-munitions. A mystic ardour was in me, because I believed I was striving not only for my country, but for civilisation.

I had always been a firm opponent of German militarism, and of every kind of imperialism and nationalism based on military force. When those of my compatriots who now extol French militarism were supporters of the Kaiser and of German imperialism, I openly expressed my disgust, and was a sincere friend of democratic France.

I indeed believed in a war of the peoples against German militarism, and I at once supported Italy's entry into the war, believing that there would come from it more justice between man and man, and a more peaceful co-existence among nations.

But, immediately after the victory, I became aware that an intoxication, a dangerous enemy to peace, was beginning to show itself in Italy, and that a language was being spoken which was no longer that which had been employed to explain our intervention in the war. I believed that all our forces ought to be directed towards framing a true and just peace; and the expressions of opinion which burst forth in France in particular, and

which spread to England and Italy, shocked me. Had we then fought against war merely to make fresh wars? Had we declared that we wanted to destroy militarism, merely to create a new and more virulent form of militarism? Had we declared that we were fighting in defence of democracy and liberty merely to destroy democracy and liberty in the very places where they were most deeply rooted? I resigned from the government in the middle of January, 1919. My conscience had passed through a deep crisis, and a great anxiety had entered my mind.

Other politicians, who had drawn up the treaty and had fallen into the mighty snare, followed me through this same spiritual crisis.

When Lansing, Secretary of State in Wilson's government, returned to America, he, too, declared his disillusionment and his sorrow, after having signed the iniquitous treaty which is threatening the existence of civilisation, which in so many countries has suffocated liberty of action, of thought, of speech, and of economic initiative, and which has destroyed, as no war could do, a vast amount of happiness, dragging down all humanity with it.

The United States, wrote Lansing, had taken part in the war chiefly to destroy the conditions which had provoked it. Those conditions, he said, had not been destroyed. Their place had been taken by other conditions equally fruitful of hatred, of jealousy, and of suspicion. The conquerors intended to impose their combined wishes on the vanquished, and to subordinate all other interests to their own. It was true that, in order to please the public opinion of uprisen humanity, and in order to satisfy the idealism of moralists, they had embedded their alliance in the League of Nations; but, call it what one would, disguise it as one would, it was but an alliance of the victors. The League of Nations, constituted as it

was, would be the prey of every kind of greed and of every intrigue. It was called upon to declare just that which was unjust. We had a treaty of peace, but it would not bring lasting peace, because it was founded on the shifting sands of various interests. Lansing added that he was not alone in these opinions. He stated that soon after those words were written he was in London, where he discussed the treaty with some of the leading men of Great Britain. He noted their opinion, which was to the effect that the treaty was illogical and unworkable, that it was conceived in intrigue and born of greed, and that it was more calculated to provoke than to prevent wars. One of the leaders of British political thought declared that the only apparent object of the League of Nations was to perpetuate the series of unjust provisions which had been imposed by the treaty.

This was not the conclusion of Lansing alone, *i.e.* of the man who, as Secretary of State, declared war in the name of America, and signed the treaty. It was the opinion of almost all the men who signed the Treaty of Versailles; and, outside France and some of her vassal states, I have found scarcely anyone who does not feel shame and remorse at having signed it. It constitutes the greatest crime of modern peoples, who simply fell into it, just as they fell into the war, almost without being aware of it, overcome by a series of mistakes, concessions, and demands, and by weariness.

One of the principal signatories said to me: "The blame was ours, and it is we who will have to pay the penalty."

After I had signed the ratification of the treaty of peace (or rather of the treaty of war) of Versailles, the rejoicing of Paris and the cries of the newsboys filled me with deep sadness. No serious and lasting peace has ever been based on spoliation, on the torment and ruin of conquered peoples, above all of great peoples. The Peace

of Versailles is nothing but spoliation, torment, and ruin. What frightful Atridean tragedy is unfolding itself before our eyes? Will it continue throughout a long series of years? What revolutions, what wars, will follow? When a peace is truly logical it does not arouse the enthusiasm of crowds. It rouses rather ill-feeling, hatred, and indignation, and almost always results in disillusionment.

I recalled two other wars and two other peace-treaties of the beginning of the twentieth century, and I saw down what a precipice humanity had fallen in following the spirit of plunder and a programme of violence.

The Boer war had been a great strain for Britain. She had had to fight on inhospitable soil, at an enormous distance, at great expense, and had met both victory and defeat. She had endured barbarities and had inflicted barbarities. Peace was signed on 21st May, 1902. I was then in London, and I remember that the principal concern of British statesmen was to find a means of changing the vanquished into friends. In fact, no injustice was inflicted. The victorious general decided to pay public homage to his defeated opponent. From that peace emerged the Union of South Africa, which caused one great state to rise where before there were a number of small discordant states. The Union formed one magnificent Dominion, whose people not only retained no hatred for the English, but, in the European war, gave its resources and sent its sons to fight beside the English. At the time of the Anglo-Boer peace I saw many of the most responsible leaders of Great Britain, but in none of them did I find any desire other than that of establishing a real peace and friendly relations with the vanquished.

While Europe was still concerned with the Boer war, a more formidable war broke out between Russia and Japan, the greatest conflict of modern times up to the tragic summer of 1914. Contrary to the general expectation, Russia was badly defeated. Her fleet was destroyed,

her army crushed. Then Japan was swept by a veritable nationalist frenzy. Victorious over China, victorious over Russia, she had defeated the two most extensive empires of the globe, and her people were blinded with national pride. There was a frenzied demand for conquests, a rage for great cessions of territory and for enormous indemnities. The Japanese government realised that a moderate and just peace, with few territorial gains and no indemnities, could alone be the glory of Japan in the present, and her security in the future. The Treaty of Portsmouth stands as an example of greatness and of moderation. The Japanese received none of those things which they so ardently desired. On the 5th and 6th September, 1905, when the news of the clauses of the treaty reached Tokio and became generally known, terrible scenes took place throughout the whole of Japan, and especially in the capital. The people believed they had been betrayed and, after an interval of stupor and consternation, abandoned themselves to the most insane violence. Many buildings were destroyed, including nearly all the Christian churches. The houses of Ministers of State were burst open, an attempt was made to burn the government buildings, and a number of persons were killed and wounded. The riots began to assume the character of an anti-Christian movement and a social upheaval. Bands of armed men went about in every direction, laying down combustible material, and the principal cities, especially Tokio, experienced insurrections. For a short time the State seemed to be tottering to its foundations. The masses had the determination, at whatever cost, to slaughter the Ministers who had concluded a treaty which satisfied no one. But the Ministers, by not asking for an indemnity, and by not demanding large acquisitions of territory, had accomplished an act of great wisdom, and had secured the future of Japan. They clearly understood that a just

peace was a bulwark against further wars, that war-debts would bring wisdom in their train, and that financial embarrassments were a safeguard against future follies. An eminent French writer, who had witnessed all the Japanese revolts of September, 1905, concluded by expressing his admiration for those statesmen who, by the sacrifice of their popularity, and at the risk of their lives, had decreed that all the energy expended on the war should end in disillusionment. The most illustrious among the Japanese immediately afterwards expressed the opinion that if Japan had been able to obtain from Russia all that the Japanese wanted, they would have been overcome by a pride so excessive as to make them intolerable to all the other nations on earth, and the indemnity would have been entirely expended on fresh military and naval armaments. Even if Japan had no longer had any enemies, every time that events allowed of it she would have waged war. What war? Any war, no matter what war.

France has now decided to do the contrary to Japan, and has prepared a peace which is nothing but war, out of those peace-treaties which, as Clemenceau said, are a method of continuing the war. What war, since the enemies of yesterday are unarmed and ruined? To-morrow, perhaps, any war, no matter what war.

In January, 1920, the sessions of the Conference helped to augment my depressed state of mind. All those things were wanted which I did not want. Two demands in particular were put forward which I did not like. The first was the demand made to Holland to hand the Kaiser over for trial. The second was the demand made to Germany to hand over many thousands of German officers who were charged with atrocities (I myself saw the lists of names, which had been reduced from time to time). I vigorously opposed both demands, for, even though they were allowed by the treaty, they

were absurd and immoral. I fought energetically against them. How could the Kaiser be tried, if we, who were his enemies, were to be his judges, and if the treaty had declared the whole German people to be responsible, and had imposed the severest penalties upon them? How could the German people be required to hand over thousands of officers to be tried by us? And how could we judge them? Had not we, too, committed atrocities during the war? I therefore obtained an assurance that no unfair pressure should be brought to bear against Holland, but merely a request which it was known would bring no result, and that the trial of German officers should take place in Germany itself and before German judges, at Leipzig.

There had been a suggestion to send the Kaiser to the little island of Curaçao, which has an unhealthy climate, and this proposed deportation was discussed in all seriousness. It was a useless act of malevolence, and I did my best to secure its abandonment.

Error gives birth to error, and wrong gives birth to wrong. From that time onward things have gone from bad to worse. Militarists, ambitious statesmen, journalists in search of sensational news, bankers in search of business, and war-profiteers continually in search of large gains, have lowered the sense of responsibility and the level of public morals throughout the whole of Europe.

Julius Cæsar was not only one of the greatest military leaders whom the human race has produced, but also a convinced and sincere democrat, who, in our days, would be derisively called a Social Democrat. In his opinions he was a real successor of the Gracchi. After he had conquered the Gauls and the Germans he wrote in his *Commentaries*, with profound wisdom and modesty, that chance is very powerful in all things, especially in military affairs (*Multum cum in omnibus rebus tum in re militari potest fortuna*). France was victorious in war, aided by fortune, and with the help of all free peoples;

but she has not learnt how to make any renunciation, and has only given force a keener edge. She has imposed upon the Germans humiliations and torments which the Germans, when victorious, never imposed upon her. What would have happened in 1815 and in 1870 if the Germans had done to the French that which the French have done to the Germans since 1919? Julius Cæsar, who knew the nature of both races thoroughly, remarked that the spirit of the Gauls was as ardent and ready to undertake a war as it was weak and unresisting in face of a reverse (*Nam ut ad bella suscipienda Gallorum alacer ac promptus est animus, sic mollis ac minime resistens ad calamitates perferendas mens eorum est*). Let us suppose that the Germans, after their victory in 1870, had proceeded to occupy French territory indefinitely as far as Lyons; that they had deprived France of her merchant marine, her colonies, her foreign credits, her mines, and her best resources; that, after disarming her by land and sea, they had sent black troops to Marseilles and Bordeaux; that they had periodically invaded fresh territory and started an agitation to divide France into three or four states; that they had proceeded to make a corridor like that of Danzig, stretching from German territory to Marseilles; and that Marseilles, which is not more French than Danzig is German, had been placed under a compliant League of Nations, as Danzig now is. What would have happened? Let us suppose also that France had seen French citizens judged in time of peace by German military tribunals, and that France had had to set all her citizens at work to pay impossible indemnities. What would the French have said, and what would they have done? I do not know what they would have done, or how they would have endured force; but I do know that the Germans have never stained themselves with the crimes of their conquerors.

Facts may be juggled with as one will, they may be

presented as one will—even contrary to the truth—but truth has a mysterious, almost divine power of expansion, and sooner or later the whole world, economically impoverished and morally outraged, must experience a great reaction, and the responsibility for it all will be laid at the door of French imperialism.

I have been (and I wish it to be always kept in mind) a sincere friend of France, and I was a tenacious opponent of German militarism before the war. My present troubled state of mind is due to the fact that the situation has been reversed. Yet I think that even now I love France more sincerely than those who aid and abet her violence and urge her into error. I still belong to that band of statesmen who believe in the necessity of a frank agreement between France and Germany, and in a straightforward understanding between the two peoples, on a basis of absolute equality and co-operation. Can France and Germany base their existence merely on a policy of destruction and extermination? Is it not possible for the two countries to reconstruct themselves in a great harmonious concord? No act of violence will be forgotten, no offence will be forgotten, Germany will not die. Germany, after passing through a series of cataclysms, of internal crises, of attempts to disintegrate her, will rise again, more numerous, more strong, more united. Will vengeance for all the acts of gross injustice which she has endured have to be set before her as the object of her existence as a nation? What will become of Europe if a century of human activity is devoted to the preparation of future vendettas?

Not to combat the unjust demands of present-day France is equivalent to aiding and abetting her in her errors, and to preparing the ground for her ruin. Nothing but the firm opposition of free peoples will ensure the resurrection of democratic France, and, possibly, the future union of French and Germans.

A French writer asked me: "Do you not think that an agreement between France and Germany would be a danger to Italy?"

I recalled to his memory Victor Hugo's ode to Germany, the great country of which music is the very breath, which has produced heroes loftier than the summit of Mount Athos, and whose deeds are everywhere renowned; and I told him that Victor Hugo, even after the defeat of France in 1870, had, in the Parliament held at Bordeaux, hailed the union of the two peoples as the salvation of European civilisation. Italy can reap nothing but advantage and security from such a union.

To-day, when everyone is denying the right to exist, we stand fast for it. While everyone is outraging democracy, we love it. While everyone is deriding liberty, we declare that it is the objective of life and the path to greatness. While everyone in Europe is lauding violence, we detest it, and we turn to the free peoples, especially to the Americans, to ask them to share with us our principles and our faith. After every speech of Poincaré, I have determined to read Victor Hugo again, and I have felt exactly as if I had passed from a death-chamber into a land bathed in sunlight. Let us not doubt, let us not hesitate, for we have life within us to give us strength.

> Ne doutons pas. Croyons. Emplissons l'étendue
> De notre confiance, humble, ailée, éperdue.
> Soyons l'immense oui.

I ought also to have added with Victor Hugo: "*Que notre cécité ne soit pas un obstacle.*" But I should have considered that lacking in respect for Poincaré, which certainly was not my intention.

NITTI.

Acquafredda in Basilicata.

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THEY MAKE A DESERT

CHAPTER I

THE DECADENCE OF EUROPE SINCE THE WAR, AND THE INDIFFERENCE OF AMERICA SINCE THE PEACE

IMMEDIATELY after the United States entered the war in 1917, I had to go to Washington, and afterwards into many other cities in the Union, in company with other representatives of the Italian government. We met with a cordial reception everywhere, and, in some cities, with great enthusiasm. The official speeches were of the kind which were made practically everywhere during the war. We reiterated every day that German militarism alone was responsible for the war; that we were not making war on the German people, but on the Kaiser and the military caste. We called to mind the wrongs committed by Germany, particularly the invasion of Belgium, the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*, and the execution of Miss Cavell. We declared solemnly that we were fighting for the principles of liberty, nationality, justice, and self-determination; and we asserted that the defeat of Germany meant the end of militarism; that it was a war to end war, and that peace would follow. I often heard it even said that there would be eternal peace.

One never appeals in vain to sentiment when speaking to Americans. Americans are business men on the surface; but, underneath, they are perhaps the most idealistic people on earth. The fight for wealth has absorbed only their practical activities; but, in the majority of them, the soul of the persecuted still exists. The United States

have been built up by those who would not renounce their religious or political creed. Bold Huguenots placed themselves side by side with men persecuted by the kings of England. Later, those who suffered from the misery and the economic restrictions of the old European States, those bold spirits who would not endure the poverty of their forefathers, or who could not adapt themselves to a dreary life of privation, went from every part of Europe to form the American people. Even if economic activity has absorbed almost all their energies in the practical sphere of life, there has remained at the bottom of the American spirit a feeling of aversion for tyranny of every kind, and an idealistic tendency such as is to be found only among very few other peoples. He who speaks to an American public man knows that he will not appeal in vain to the most noble and generous sentiments.

In all countries speeches by politicians and by men who move in political circles are always in the same strain, and seldom abandon that externally composed manner which allows a speaker to express his own thoughts only to a limited degree.

In addition to appeals to the public, each of the belligerents carried on a direct campaign. The activity of Great Britain was essentially practical. She assumed the task of collecting and co-ordinating war-material for herself and her allies. She did not undervalue anyone else's efforts, but she every day intensified her own. France carried on a propaganda guided by great perspicacity. She constantly called to mind the old comradeship in arms, and the names of Lafayette and Rochambeau. She described the Germans as the modern barbarians; to her the "Boches" were the Barbarians, the modern Huns, the modern Vandals; and she solemnly declared her adherence to all those democratic principles which are dear to the American heart. Yet, at the same time,

while imparting the conviction that the democratic character of France was not only the cause of the war with the Germans but also the bulwark of the struggle against them, she did her utmost to see that all assistance in men and munitions should be sent to France. In spite of the large number of Italians in America, Italian propaganda was on a very small scale and often inconsistent, and the effort put forth in the war by Italy was almost unknown in America. American newspapers paid little attention to it, and Italian requests were often put in an unfavourable light, by contrast with the energetic Jugoslav propaganda, which was assiduous and intense. Poles, Czechs, and Jugoslavs derived considerable advantage from the French propaganda, and also from the fact that few understood the gravity and even danger of many of their requests. Wilson had the air of infallibility of one who was not only the decisive factor in the war, but also of one who, up to then, had been the supreme arbiter of all the questions and the controversies of Europe. I saw at once, from his very first decisions and from the attitude which he adopted, that he had a sincere determination to do the right thing, but that he was almost entirely ignorant of European questions, or viewed them through the light of certain dogmatic principles previously laid down. I saw, too, that he would fall into all the errors of the French policy, that peace would be made at Paris, and that it would be a peace of violence. Encased within his principles as in a coat of mail, he could not even see which way the stream of facts was flowing; and no one dared raise any obstacle to his immense power.

The great mass of the American people, especially in the Centre and the West, had accepted the war without enthusiasm. It was common knowledge that those of German origin regarded the war with great misgiving. The same was true of those of Scandinavian and Dutch

descent, and also of many Americans of old-established families. I took the opportunity, when I had it, of talking with Americans of different classes of society—not only with bankers and politicians, but also with people of a more modest station in life, with clerks, farmers, and workmen. I found great reserve among all of them, and all of them told me that America had no concern in European affairs; that Europe must solve her own questions herself; and that, after the war, America should return again to Monroe's teaching and avoid all unnecessary adventures. The conviction that America should keep outside all European controversies was deeply and firmly rooted among all of them.

When the Peace Conference was opened after the victorious conclusion of the war, Wilson came to Europe to attend its meetings. He was received, especially in France and Italy, with wild enthusiasm. Everyone hoped for his support; and everyone not only felt grateful to him, but also looked to him for future benefits. There has been no greater political mistake than Wilson's coming to Europe and his participation in the Conference. He was the only head of a State to take part in a conference otherwise reserved to heads of governments alone. All the advantages of his exceptional position were cancelled at a stroke. He was no longer the supreme arbiter, but only a participant in the contest, and he was even in an inferior position. Not only did he know less than the others about European affairs, but, owing to his desire to secure the acceptance of his principles about a League of Nations, he was constantly compelled to give way on matters concerning the composition of those nations. From the moment when the Conference opened at Paris, the representatives of France assumed control of all the records, of all the reports of proceedings, and of the Press, and created the atmosphere of the Conference. By a series of concessions, the significance of which he did

not see, President Wilson cancelled his whole programme, until nothing was left but the bare scaffolding of a League of Nations. It was absurd to create a League of Nations in order to avoid wars, at a time when conditions were being imposed on the vanquished which were the negation of all the principles affirmed during the war, and when, through the medium of the Reparations Commission, which was organised in order to exact an indemnity of enormous but undefined amount, contrary to all precedent and to all logic, lengthy military occupations were being fixed, which were certain to become the base of every kind of violence. The history of the Conference is well known; but not enough is known of all the intrigues and dishonest manœuvres which stamp the long series of errors which made the Treaty of Versailles and the other four treaties that followed it as the most outrageous, dishonest, and designing documents recorded in modern history. These treaties, which have reduced Europe to its present state of anarchy and disorder, would not have been possible except for Wilson's policy; or, to express it more exactly, they would not have been possible if he had taken facts into account. But, when Wilson had made his first and most harmful concessions, the necessity for his returning to America with the assurance of having at least saved the principle of a League of Nations (*i.e.* the necessity for giving American democracy the prestige of having created the means considered appropriate for ensuring peace) made him accept a series of measures which were the negation of his principles, and which could only wound the Americans' practical mind and sense of justice.

Nevertheless, Wilson could not yield to some of the most absurd demands, particularly those put forward by France (*e.g.* the immediate cession of Upper Silesia to Poland, the immediate cession of the Saar to France), and therefore, as he had consented to other absurd

demands, he finally irritated everybody. In Italy, meetings were held against him. In France, almost everyone spoke badly of him, and he returned home without leaving behind any enthusiasm, in strong contrast to the wild ovations of a few months earlier. Now that the principles of his policy had been abandoned or thrust aside, the prestige attached to that policy was lost with them.

He had accepted the most dishonourable clauses of the treaty, such as the separation of East Prussia from West Prussia by means of the ridiculous Danzig corridor, the cession in perpetuity of the Saar mines to France, and the attempt to annex the thoroughly German territory of the Saar to France after the lapse of fifteen years. He had agreed that the vanquished were to lay down their arms at the same time that the victors were occupying their territory and were putting no check on their own armaments. He had allotted completely German and Magyar territories haphazard to peoples who claimed them solely by right of conquest, or even to peoples who did not claim them at all—an allotment made merely in order to have co-interested parties. He had agreed that Germany was to be deprived of all her transferable wealth, and that a thoroughly disreputable mechanism of violence should be established under the name of a Reparations Commission. He had decided that the League of Nations, with the complicity of all the states which formed part of it, should defend the integrity of the treaties; that is to say, that they should defend crime. In addition to all this, Wilson had agreed that, in addition to the presence of armies of occupation on the Rhine, America and Great Britain should guarantee France against any act of war by Germany in the future.

This guarantee marked not only the negation of the Monroe doctrine and the definite and unlimited participation of America in all European events, but was also

a guarantee for abuses of every kind. Could the most intelligent among the Americans agree that the United States should also guarantee, by means of military force and participation in war, such moral absurdities as the Saar and Danzig? Could they guarantee the existence of states in which a minority of the nation oppresses a majority of the nation? When Germany, through the medium of the Reparations Commission, had been deprived of all the attributes and prerogatives of a sovereign state, should America, with her arms too, guarantee all plunder, present and to come, of the Reparations Commission?

Everyone knows the feeling of mistrust and repugnance which the Treaty of Versailles produced in America. Scarcely had its clauses become known, when the Senate gave proof of a decided opposition. This opposition (in view of the composition of the Senate) did not seem to extend to the whole treaty. It seemed rather that certain details were discussed and points of minor importance criticised. Yet, indeed, when one reads the debates of the American Senate carefully, one sees at once that what was wanted was to reject the treaty in its entirety, without appearing to do it roughly, and without lessening the President's authority too much. The Senate's "Committee of Foreign Relations," dealing with the subject of the Treaty of Versailles, explicitly acknowledged that the pact of the League of Nations was in fact only an alliance of victors, not a league of peoples, and declared its conviction that the alliance not only was not eliminating war, but was preparing the ground for new wars, while at the same time it was needlessly sacrificing the independent policy which the United States pursued of promoting the cause of world-peace by their active support.

There could be no act of greater wisdom than the firm resistance of the American Senate to Wilson's requests, and its rejection of the Treaty of Versailles. After that rejection the Senate became even more distrustful.

In order to understand how many of the most responsible American politicians saw clearly into the intentions and the policy of France, it suffices to read the debate which took place in the American Senate on the occasion of Clemenceau's visit to the United States, and, above all, to read the explicit statements of Senators Borah and Hitchcock, and the statements of Senators Caraway, Capper, Norris, Edge, and others, which are sufficiently serious.

As America had no longer any responsibility concerning the treaties, she wished to accentuate her detachment from European affairs. Not only has there been a return to the Monroe doctrines, but even a repugnance for any act or any initiative calculated to involve American responsibility. Any discussion touching on the cancellation of inter-allied debts has met with a cold reception; and all financial intervention of any kind in Europe has been regarded as a danger. No party has been willing to take up the burden of any act of participation in European affairs whatsoever. The Americans exact their credits for the armies of occupation, and have regulated their credits with Great Britain. They try not to take part in any conference, or they content themselves with sending an "observer," as they call him—a somewhat strange character, unknown up to the present in diplomatic relations between nations.

This aloofness is completely justified by what is taking place in Europe.

Since the war, Europe has been split up into a large number of states. She has been Balkanised. Her internal mistrusts and hates have grown. Imperialism, which used to be the disease of the great, has become the disease of the little; and, the more wretched their condition, the more stupid and intolerable has their pride become. There are more men under arms than before the war. There is a greedy search for means of destruction, and

inducements to war are increasing daily. France, notwithstanding the inability of her people to increase in number, has given clear proof of a will to dominate, and has revealed an imperialist programme surpassing the wildest dreams of Napoleon. It is true that Napoleon is lacking, but it is also true that the desire to control Europe towards which France aspires is the most vast imperialist dream that has possessed any modern people. Her programme is much more extensive than that which was attributed to the intentions of Germany under the Kaiser. Wilhelm II. perhaps had unbounded intentions, and expressed them in a vulgar and contradictory way: but France, even while continually declaring herself the representative of democracy, is doing that which no responsible state ever dared to do.

Reading American newspapers, and talking with Americans of standing, we get no impression other than that America, while preserving the most cordial relations with those who were associated with her in the war, wishes to hold entirely aloof from European affairs. The majority of the Americans think that when Europeans, after passing through further crises, begin to talk reasonably, then perhaps it will be time to concern themselves with Europe. But, while the madness lasts, while violence reigns, it is better not to do so.

Great Britain is perhaps the only state which is carrying out, or attempting to carry out, a real policy of peace on the Continent. In spite of certain mistakes, she sees that the sole path to salvation lies through the reforging and resumption of moral relations, *i.e.* through the abandonment of military occupations and the systematisation of reparations on honest lines.

France, however, notwithstanding the policy of Britain, pursues her policy of disintegrating Central Europe and her struggle for the hegemony of the Continent.

France, notwithstanding the very grave disorder of her

finances, has a close economic system, and is pursuing her policy to the utmost.

Leaving Russia out of account, France is the only European state which possesses in her own territory all the necessities of life. With her thin population, she can produce without effort the corn, meat and fats necessary for her existence. She has an abundant supply of iron and large quantities of coal. She possesses, especially in her colonies, enormous quantities of fertilisers. Although her population is not increasing, but tends rather to decrease, she has the most extensive colonial empire.

Since the war, France has tried, and is still trying, to realise that dream of dominating Europe which Richelieu, Louis XIV. and Napoleon realised only for a very brief period.

While all other powers have either laid down their arms since the war, or have curtailed their armaments, France has increased hers to a remarkable degree. Notwithstanding the state of her finances and the difficulties which she experiences from a population which does not increase, France has organised the largest and most efficient army in the world. She has developed her aeroplanes and submarines to a formidable extent These are certainly not directed against Germany, but have as their aim the paralysation of England's peace-policy.

France, after obtaining the most cruel and unjust of peace-treaties, violates it every day by invading German territory. In reality, her objects are clearly defined. She aims at the hegemony of the Continent, based on the control of coal and iron, on the employment of a large army, and on the dismemberment of Germany. Every possible humiliation has been imposed on Germany from the time she laid down her arms, and every possible violation of her territory has been committed. The Treaty of Versailles took from Germany her greatest resources and seven million people. It is now a matter

of taking her coal from her, and of killing her industrial power. The treaty dismembered East Germany. It is now a matter of dismembering West Germany. The programme is to annex the Saar, to detach the Rhineland (*i.e.* eleven million Germans), and to separate Bavaria. Military occupations and economic ruin are to smash the spiritual and economic unity of Germany, and to reduce her to a hotchpotch of mistrustful, discordant states, in which only a mutilated Prussia will be left, at strife with the other German states. France, by maintaining her aversion for Russia until the latter accepted control of her finances and raw materials, and by co-ordinating the activity of the states formed out of the war, and which to a great extent are her vassals, would realise an even greater imperialist programme than the one which was shattered at Waterloo.

We shall have an opportunity to examine this programme later. Let it suffice for the present to have indicated it.

Great Britain, owing to the necessity which she has to live by trade and to communicate freely with the Continent, desires nothing but peace and a termination of the present disorder. Just as imperialist Germany was a danger to her, so France is now a more real and more potent danger.

Thus there are now two policies in Europe—the British policy, which, after many vacillations and many mistakes, tends towards reconstruction for the advantage of all; and the policy of France, which aims at undisputed domination, by means of the collapse of Germany and the dissolution of Central Europe.

This new situation has been grasped only by a few intelligent statesmen in America. The greater part of the American public continues, however, to reason with pre-war conceptions, or to repeat things which were said during the war; nor can it be said that the American

newspapers are adopting a policy calculated to enlighten the public.

As America was the decisive factor in the victory, she has the greatest share in the responsibility for the peace, and is also morally responsible for all that has taken place to the detriment of the vanquished since the treaties were formulated. Even if the treaties were the negation of all the pledges which Wilson had made during the war, the violation of those same peace-treaties, perpetrated in the most cynical fashion, has been the negation of the treaties themselves.

When the issue of the conflict was still very uncertain, and the Entente and the Central Empires were locked in a desperate struggle, the intervention of America rapidly decided the victory. America brought into the conflict not only her immense economic and technical resources, but also her immense reserves of men.

But, in order to undermine the resistance of the Germans, America brought also her clearly-defined attitude. She was not fighting against the German people, but against German imperialism.

Wilson laid down (not in his own name, but in the name of the whole of the American people), what were to be the conditions of peace. International agreements were to be made without secret diplomacy; all customs barriers were to be removed; colonial rights were to be regulated with a regard for the subject peoples; there were to be no indemnities for the victors; adequate guarantees were to be *given and received* for the reduction of all armies, so that victors and vanquished should limit their armaments to the minimum allowed by internal security. Wilson also laid down the territorial modifications which were to be allowed in the map of Europe.

No one in America could reasonably think that Wilson's proclamations and announcements were merely literary exercises. He was not giving a lecture on common

law at Princeton University. He was not even speaking in the name or on behalf of his party. He was speaking as head of the State, in the name of all the American people, and solemn pledges were involved in his speech.

Germany, after Wilson's proclamations, felt her internal resistance grow weaker. Why continue an arduous war, the result of which was becoming more and more threatening, when it was possible to make a fair peace and go back to work in a peace which was not humiliating?

When Prince Max of Baden said in the American Press that he had a right to call to mind the fact that the armistice was concluded by him on America's guarantee that Wilson's principles would be put into operation, he spoke the truth. He also spoke the truth by asserting that when Americans say: "Let Europe go to ruin in her own chaos," Europe had the right to answer: "You are responsible for this chaos."

As America was the decisive factor in victory and the centre of all action tending towards peace at the time the treaties were formulated, the responsibility for the present disordered state of Europe lies principally at her door. Nations cannot disown responsibility for the harm which they have produced. Although all may admit that every nation must, above all, think for itself and take precautions for its own situation, there are certain international obligations which cannot be ignored. It is impossible to ignore one's pledges when the task of executing them is difficult; and a great people like the Americans, above all, cannot do such a thing.

When Germany, contrary to the stipulations of the treaty, has become the objective of every kind of plunder; when the armies of occupation on the Rhine contain, or have contained, merely as an outrage, representatives of coloured races from the lowest scale of civilisation, and commit every kind of violence; when German territory is not respected, and acts of violence not permitted in

time of war are perpetrated in time of peace, America cannot content herself with saying: "Let us wait until the chaos comes to an end in Europe, or until Europe is ruined in her own chaos."

Nations have certain responsibilities which have no sanction other than the conscience of the nation itself; and it is to that alone that one can ultimately turn.

No one reasonably asks America for any military action, and no one even asks her to declare for either of the two parties which are dividing Europe into a camp in which all the microbes of violence and discord are breeding. The most calm and enlightened minds ask America only to maintain a firm and decided attitude, such as is to be expected from a nation with her responsibility; to take advantage of her great economic strength and moral prestige in order to aid every effort towards peace, and openly to express her disgust for the policy of violence which is now ruining Europe. France will not abandon her policy of disintegration and imperialism until Great Britain and America, linked in one common sentiment, act on the public opinion of the world in a decided manner.

Nothing, however, is more difficult, especially for a European politician, than to talk to the Americans about problems which concern their national life.

Not only is there a diffidence which is quite legitimate, but there is also the difficulty of reaching the people directly, and therefore of acting on public opinion.

In no country is less interest taken in foreign politics than is the case in America. The American nation has been built up on the amalgamation and the fusion of representatives from every nation in Europe. Many scarcely remember their origin. What unites them all is the American ideal.

On the other hand, America, on account of her situation, is inclined to attach the minimum of importance to European events. Even if she appreciates the efforts of

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all other nations, she cannot take a decided part on any one side. I have been surprised to find how little interest is displayed in foreign politics by even the most cultured Americans. The newspapers of the Centre and West often devote less space to the greatest events of European life than to the most insignificant local happenings.

Europe of to-day has a number of states, in which disorder grows apace. How many are there? It is difficult to say, in view of the unstable form of some of them. Their surface covers less than four million square miles. The United States alone cover three million square miles, or, with the territories outside the Union, nearly four million. On the north, Canada is more extensive than the whole of Europe. On the south, Mexico covers almost twice as much ground as the three Entente states—Britain, France, and Italy. The United States hold an absolute primacy in the production of nearly all the most important raw materials—corn, cattle, cotton, coal, iron, petroleum, etc. As far as future economic expansion is concerned, their attention turns chiefly to the adjoining countries, Canada and Mexico. Much has been said in the past, and with great exaggeration, of a probable conflict between the United States and Japan, on account of their situation, which makes them rivals in Asia. I have never believed in this supposed conflict, and, when I have spoken about it to the most intelligent politicians of Japan, I have found that they did not think it possible either. The Americans, who are very indifferent to foreign politics, interest themselves in Mexico, and Japan in particular, in every way.

I have studied the American Constitution and the structure of the American Republic carefully. It has been one of the subjects towards which I have devoted careful and diligent research for some thirty years. The more one studies the constitution of the United States, the more reason one has to admire it.

When considering the constitution of many European states, one might make use of the remark of a French bookseller of the time of the Second Empire, who, when asked by a customer whether he had a copy of the French Constitution, replied, "We do not sell periodicals."

The American Constitution, which is so clear and so precise, well deserves the eulogiums paid to it by all the jurists and politicians who have studied it carefully. It was the work of great minds, and is still a monument of political wisdom.

Even the American Constitution, however, has certain drawbacks. In no other country are the people, as a result of the Constitution, less interested in foreign politics; and in no other country is it so difficult to act in face of events which arise rapidly.

The joint power of the Executive and the Senate in foreign affairs is one of the fundamental principles of the Constitution. In all other countries the foreign policy is decided by the government alone, and the sphere of Parliament consists in exercising control, by refusing or granting the funds necessary for any action to be taken. Foreign policy in America was built up on quite a different form. Each state in the Union considered itself a sovereign state, and would not grant the President the right of concluding treaties, or of making war, without the consent of the Senate. Now, since each state, no matter how small its population, has always two representatives in the Senate, it follows that all the states take part in the foreign policy to an equal degree, and all possess the same share in the sovereignty. The senators from the Centre and West take much less interest than the others in European affairs, by reason of the character of their states and of the people whom they represent. Some senators exhibit a diffidence which nothing can diminish towards everything that concerns Europe.

I consider that the underlying principle of the Ameri-

can Constitution, even in matters of foreign policy, is just, and that it has prevented many mistakes from being made. But from this very principle is evolved the difficulty which America experiences in acting with rapidity in those cases which can most profitably claim her intervention. The Senate must approve all treaties by a two-thirds majority; and, in order to make sure of this majority, the President must be in complete agreement and maintain close relations, not only with the senators of his own party, but also with those of the opposition. In order to negotiate treaties, he must have the opinion and consent of the whole of Congress. Doubtless the authors of the Constitution, knowing that the American nation is composed of various races, and that therefore every single action may possibly be in conflict with the feelings of some of them (provided it is not absolutely necessary in the national interest), wished, in order to preserve internal harmony, to prevent any adventurous scheme and anything that might cause unnecessary discord.

Naturally, nothing can be kept secret in America's foreign policy, for a secret cannot be kept for any length of time when it is communicated to the whole Senate. It is true that those who drew up the Constitution pledged themselves to secrecy, and kept it jealously; but that was the heroic age, and the secret in question was a solemn fact which was not concerned with every-day life. The duties of the Secretary of State for America are therefore much less complicated than are those of the Foreign Ministers of European countries. Since the Senate has to take a share in the moulding of the foreign policy, and also to approve the nomination of those who, as ambassadors, are to execute it, it is evident, not only that there can be no secrecy, but also that every kind of action and initiative is necessarily limited, when it is not sanctioned or desired by public opinion.

All this explains the indifference of the American public to foreign politics. The United States, fortunately for themselves, have no troublesome or dangerous neighbours. They need not fear any invasion or any attack by neighbouring countries. It is sufficient for Americans if their flag is respected abroad; everything else seems superfluous. For this reason, any movement which can possibly limit the liberty of action, and, above all, the liberty of abstention of the United States, arouses mistrust—even the most noble movements. The League of Nations, even though proposed by Wilson, was received with suspicion. Even President Harding's noble endeavour to establish a Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague met with ill-success. Many asked themselves if it was of any real use for the United States to have a supreme arbitrator, when, by holding themselves aloof, they could develop their own resources and arbitrate as to the lot of others.

Since the European War, into which America entered under pressure from the Eastern States, and more for sentimental reasons than economic interests, the majority of Americans have kept more and more to the paths of tradition. Many who have been to Europe have carried back with them a feeling of horror at its condition, and some of them have not even tried to conceal this. The American senators, financiers, and scholars with whom I have been in communication or seen personally since the war, readily admit that things have gone very badly, and that Europe is threatened with ruin. But they have almost all arrived at the same conclusion—that Europe must find within herself the energy necessary for her reconstruction, and that only then will America be able to take a serious interest in European problems.

Some members of the American government who have been to Europe, such as Hoover, Mellon, and Davis, have carried back a very bad impression of it, and have taken

no pains to conceal it. The Secretary of the Treasury, Mellon, who is a very experienced business man and a banker, has asserted that a return to normal conditions is impossible so long as the reparations problem remains unsolved, which, on the other hand, cannot be solved so long as France continues with her present policy. None of the states on the continent of Europe can now pay its debts to America. Hoover has arrived at even more pessimistic conclusions on the condition of Europe. The Minister of Labour, Davis, has been particularly concerned with the spectacle which the Old World presents of millions of men who want to emigrate and flee into the unknown, and with the necessity for maintaining the barriers against immigration, and, if necessary, of building them even higher.

Senator H. W. Johnson of California, while showing his lack of confidence in all foreign propaganda in the United States, has asserted that he found lack of confidence and general suspicion in all the European countries which he visited. Every European country mistrusts the others, and all mistrust America. He has declared that what is needed from America is not advice, but financial, and if necessary, military aid, and that in the meanwhile American money must represent the American people.

Senator O. W. Underwood of Alabama, after having interviewed many prominent politicians in Europe, has arrived at the conclusion that there are now more potential causes of war in Europe than there were in 1914. If fresh wars are not taking place, it is not because a *casus belli* is wanting, but because Europe is financially and economically exhausted. Senator Underwood, however, who is a man of very clear outlook, realises that the policy of the United States is now purely negative; that the European disaster may in the future be a source of great harm to America; and that what is necessary is a broad-minded and progressive policy rather than a slow legal procedure.

Senator W. E. Borah of Idaho has exposed repeatedly and with great precision all the consequences of the French policy of disintegration. He has been perhaps the only one, and certainly the most determined one, to point out the necessity for some direct policy to prevent the most outstanding and more culpable forms of violence. Having verified that the present disorder of Europe is injuring the life and threatening the prosperity of the world, he has said that, if America must intervene, it will be only when a period has been put to the post-war policy of imperialism and militarism. When the victorious countries are willing to consider the question of reducing the reparations to reasonable dimensions, which will permit Germany to live and to pay, when they are willing to reduce the armies of occupation, to recognise the Russian government, and to make public the secret military agreements concluded between France and a number of the minor states in order to sanction the occupation of the Ruhr, then only will America be able to commence her work of finding a way of salvation. But if the policy pursued for four years is to continue, the United States can do nothing. Any friendly intervention on their part would serve only to ruin Germany, to pay the armies of occupation, or to sanction that stupid militarist policy which is bearing the world towards another war. Talking does not change actual facts. So long as millions of men, Senator Borah has said, are threatened with starvation and ruin, and so long as bankruptcy hangs over many states, any action by America, other than that of contributing to a real peace and to the end of the reign of force, would be irrational.

Senator R. H. La Follette of Wisconsin has said and written many interesting things on the disordered state of European political currents, and the opinions expressed by Senators T. H. Caraway of Arkansas, A. Capper of Kansas, G. W. Norris of Nebraska, W. E.

Edge of New Jersey, R. L. Owen of Oklahoma, and others, should be borne in mind.

Senator R. L. Owen of Oklahoma has made many important pronouncements. In a speech made before the Senate on 18th December, 1923, he produced ample documentary evidence to show that the responsibility for the war did not lie at the door of Germany and the vanquished, or at least that it did not lie at their door alone. A result of this speech was the proposal of a resolution on 16th February, 1924, in which it was suggested to the American Senate that, in view of the fresh documents, an extensive inquiry should be made into the question of responsibility for the war.

There are different grades of opinion in the American Senate.

I have collected from the American Press a very large number of statements by senators, members of Congress, financiers and authors. With few variations I have found in almost all of them the same spirit of mistrust of Europe. Nevertheless, the situation remains the same. Chaos exists in Europe; but is not America the party most responsible for that chaos?

Europe is going farther and farther along the road to collapse. But would not the collapse of Europe be a disaster for America too? And is it not still possible to avoid it without it being necessary for the United States to engage in military action, or for the American people to undertake some financial adventure?

The American Press has not done anything directly calculated to enlighten its public sufficiently on European affairs. Its general tone has rather been one of suspicion. On the other hand, there exists in the States a propaganda which often describes things in a way which is absolutely contrary to the truth.

During the war the Entente states carried on an extensive propaganda throughout the whole territory of the

United States, often with means supplied by America herself. Some of these countries possessed actual propaganda departments, which kept in touch with the great newspapers. There were countries which used their resources less to further their own propaganda than to combat that of the others. Propaganda was, indeed, one of the great disasters of the war. A class of political beings, often unscrupulous, has come into existence, which still imagines propaganda to be its normal form of existence. Many statements have been made which are not true, but which have been so often repeated that even intelligent men now take the recollection of them as the basis of their reasoning.

If the American people have not shuddered with indignation and horror, and have not felt the necessity of uttering a sharp protest when confronted with the horrors of the occupation of the Rhine and the invasion of the Ruhr—two deeds more discreditable to civilisation than the violation of Belgium in 1914—or when confronted with the dark deeds committed in Germany, it is because the majority of them distrust everyone, and still have the ideas which were the basis of war-propaganda, and which even to-day are the basis of further propaganda.

It was the custom during the war to describe the Germans as solely responsible for the war; as the barbarians of civilised times, and as the criminal authors of all the ills of the human race. The Entente was fighting for civilisation. Germany was the personification of violence and barbarity; the Germans were Huns. There was no kind of cruelty which was not laid to their charge. When they were not shooting defenceless women, they were hacking babies' hands off.

Who among us, in some way or other, did not say these things during the war? It was not only the French who said them. Asquith said them; Lloyd George said them; I, too, said some of them. The war absorbed all our

efforts, and filled our minds. We had to win—to win at all costs. Just as poison-gas was employed, so propaganda was employed—not that any serious-minded, educated man believed all the stories which were disseminated about the Germans, but it was useful to disseminate them. For an enemy to be beaten, he must, before all else, be hated; and, for him to be hated, every kind of crime must be ascribed to him. Chivalrous deeds are done only in novels of adventure. The modern trench and poison-gas are things too horrible for wars to be waged in the style of the "Three Musketeers."

One of the world's greatest thinkers, David Hume, in his *Treatise on Human Nature*, remarks that when our nation is at war with another, we hate the enemy as treacherous, unjust and violent, while at the same time we ascribe to ourselves and our allies the attributes of justice, moderation and mercy.

Many thousands of speeches were made in America during the war, and every kind of crime was ascribed to Germany. Even when the situation was reversed after the immoral peace-treaties, and violence no longer came from the Germans, but from the conquerors, the same statements were continually repeated. The yeast inserted in the minds of the people has continued to ferment.

There is a certain residue of mistrust in the currents of American opinion. There is a residue of mistrust for England, disseminated chiefly by the Irish element of the population. The practical side of the American people also comes into play, by which it is supposed that, if an air of aloofness is maintained for the present, intervention can always ensue when the almost universal collapse of the countries of Europe takes place. Many manufacturers are content to witness the depression of German industries, which forced such keen competition on neutral markets. Finally, political parties and their candidates

have a decided determination to assume no responsibility which may constitute a burden to-morrow.

In no other country, perhaps, are elections more frequent than in America. The senators are elected for six years, a third of them retiring every two years. The members of Congress are elected every two years, by universal, direct suffrage. There are also the elections to the two branches of the Legislature of each of the forty-eight states, as well as the elections to the administrative municipal bodies. Further, a number of judicial appointments depend on the popular vote. When any question rouses great differences of opinion, no one is willing to compromise his own opinion or to prejudice his action.

Distortions of the truth are not very difficult in matters connected with foreign policy, considering the small interest taken in them by the public.

In some American journals I have found, by coincidence perhaps, news from European sources which are not characterised by frankness.

Truth has found clear-sighted interpreters in the books of some American writers. Of particular interest is the book written by the banker, F. A. Vanderlip. Important and serious revelations have been written by Baker, and by E. M. House, C. Seymour, Lansing, and others. Sufficiently grave revelations have appeared in the Hearst newspapers. The *World* has published stirring articles by the great Danish critic, George Brandes, and considerations of grave import from the pen of P. B. Noyes, who, as a member of the Interallied Commission, has paid protracted visits to that theatre of the most serious abuses—the Rhine zone. The great American financier, E. R. A. Seligman, has written pages, of admirable precision, on the mistakes and illusions of the reparations policy.

Perhaps in no other country have bankers, merchants, and scholars appreciated so justly the errors and absur-

dities of the French demands as in America. I have read many publications of banks, commercial companies, and private bankers (especially those of the "Chase National Bank" of New York, and of its economist, B. M. Anderson), in which observations of the greatest interest are included.

The best publication on Germany's ability to pay is that issued by the New York Institute of Economics, of which R. S. Brookings is president. This publication is the work of two capable and scholarly men—H. G. Moulton and C. E. McGuire. It gives documentary proof, in a perfect and incontrovertible manner, that Germany has paid, up to the present time, even beyond her capacity; that each effort she has put forth has resulted only in a diminution of her powers of production and consumption; that the latest demands are simple absurdities, aiming at the ruin of Germany and the destruction of the economy of Europe. It is indeed a pity that this publication will not be read, or will be very little read, in Europe, in many countries of which the whole policy of the government and the press seems to aim only at deceiving the public.

Such publications are undoubtedly important; but, even so, one can add that the American Press has not given sufficient prominence to facts which concern post-war Europe, and that the American public, taken as a whole, is still to a great extent poisoned by war-propaganda. It has, indeed, arrived at a state of general mistrust, which, on the whole, tends to grow, and which seems to be justified by events.

Since the publication of my last two books—*Peaceless Europe* (published in America under the somewhat inexact title of *The Wreck of Europe*) and *The Decadence of Europe*—I have received a large number of letters from the United States. I, too, have written some letters to rectify certain ideas and conclusions, and to call

attention to particular points. Even people who obviously had not read my books have written to me, basing their remarks on impressions received about them from reviews in newspapers. In part of this correspondence I have noticed, time after time, the effects of the propaganda which I had known at close quarters during the war, and which, since the war, has turned its most violent weapons against Lloyd George and myself, whenever we have tried to do anything in the cause of peace.

The greater part of the letters which have reached me have been letters of agreement and support. Some, however, express doubt, or aversion to the Germans. Can the Germans complain of brutality? Did they not, when they invaded Belgium, cut off the hands of little children and commit every kind of cruelty? Did they not desire the war and impose it on others?

I have not kept all those letters, and am sorry now that I did not do so, on account of their documentary value. A politician, however, who is known outside his own country, and who concerns himself with questions which perplex the minds of nations, receives so many letters that he cannot follow them all with the same attention.

A Missouri farmer writes to me: "You are right. But why did the Germans commit so many atrocities and cut off the hands of Belgian babies?"

A Pennsylvanian manufacturer wants to rebuke me. He says: "We believed what you told us during the war. You wanted to beat Germany. You signed the Treaty of Versailles. Why are you now a pro-German?"

An Illinois lawyer remarks simply: "My opinion, and that of my friends, is that the French will do well to stay in the Ruhr until they have been paid. They would do wrong if they stayed after being paid."

That is a very naïve conclusion. The writer obviously had not read my books, but has got his ideas merely

from some newspaper—and probably had not even read that correctly.

A New York gentleman asks me: "Why do you grieve because liberty is being taken from the Germans? The Germans have never had any liberty."

Another writes from Los Angeles: "Why are the Germans ruining their own finances? It is because they want to ruin the whole world." This was perhaps written by someone who has invested a large number of dollars in marks, and now realises that he has lost them.

A clergyman writes to me from South Dakota: "Germany does not deserve consideration, because she is scheming to make fresh wars."

A gentleman, who must be an Irishman, remarks in a letter from Alabama: "You look at things from the English point of view. We do not possess the same confidence in England."

A letter from Texas, and, I think, from a farmer, says: "Perhaps you are entirely right; but America wants to occupy herself with American questions, and prefers that Europe should think of her own misfortunes herself. American dollars must be used for the development of the American people."

A doctor from Iowa agrees that "all Europe is ill; but the disease was communicated to it by Germany, which carried the virus of force."

A lady of standing, whose name I know and respect, says that if I do not believe even in a League of Nations, what do I want America to do, which she can do without injuring herself?

Another lady, from Wyoming, asks me if it is not better that Germany, being responsible for the war, should be disintegrated now, in view of the fact that she willed the war.

A gentleman from the state of Kentucky sends me a prayer, composed by a clergyman of the East, in which

God is thanked for having placed America a long way from Europe. He adds: "Everything that you say is true, but Europe, if she wishes America to be interested, must speak no more of wars, and must abandon violence; but for the present America must keep her distance."

Even if the letters of support and approval form the great majority of those which reach me, those which express doubt or criticism have particularly interested me, because they reveal, generally with great sincerity, certain states of mind which are undoubtedly to be found throughout the American people. I have been able to reply to only a few of my distant correspondents, because in each letter I would have had to enter into the most complicated details.

However, as I have already stated, in the objections which have come to me I have recognised almost always the effects of that propaganda of falsehood which, even if it was necessary during the war, has since the war constituted the greatest of equivocations and speculations.

That propaganda has not yet come to an end. It permeates almost everywhere, and has the press, even great organs of the press, within its tentacles.

Americans, in order to regulate their policy, must now ask themselves several straight questions, and answer them with the frankness which is required in a great democratic country:

Is it true that the world-war was provoked by the Germans? Is it true that Germany (or, to express it better, the German people) personifies war? Is it true that cruelty is a characteristic of the German national character? Is it true that they have no liking for liberty, and are incapable of a democratic form of government? Is it true that the French, by their occupation of German territory in accordance with the treaty (or even contrary to the treaty) propose merely to exact reparations for damage done during the war? Or is it true that they do

not believe in reparations at all, but aim at the disintegration of Germany and at obtaining the military hegemony of the Continent by securing the control of coal and iron? Do the great military forces of post-war France aim at securing peace, or at causing new wars for primacy and dominion?

I have replied exhaustively to some of these questions in my two previous books, and no one has attempted to confute my conclusions. I propose to answer others in detail, in order that opinions in Anglo-Saxon countries, and in America in particular, may be based on calm reasoning.

There is no other country where public opinion is so powerful as in the United States of America. Even if it ultimately prevails in all other countries, and even though it often prevails even in countries which have an absolute government, it is the almost absolute judge in democratic states.

Politicians of the old school, even the most enlightened among them, used to talk of public opinion with a certain aristocratic disdain. Sir Robert Peel has all the air of one who smiles at that great medley of folly, weakness, prejudices, true and false sentiments, obstinacy, and newspaper articles which is called public opinion. Nevertheless, no government lasts long unless it is based on public opinion. In America, no government is possible if it does not follow its main currents. Naturally, one must distinguish between public opinion (*i.e.* what the average man thinks and says on any given subject), and the organs, especially newspapers, which should be its expression. In not a few cases newspapers are the expression of groups of financiers or of very pronounced political tendencies, and aim rather at modifying public opinion than at interpreting it. In not a few countries they aim also at misrepresenting it.

In America, however, more than in any other country, there is, outside the great cities, a sober, religious, moral

population, which clings tenaciously to tradition, a population which, taken as a whole, is more cultured than the middle classes of practically every European state. The great strength of America lies precisely in this class, in the large number of farmers and hardworking small tradesmen, who personify stability and tradition. These tend to the formation of a typically American opinion, which, almost always, ultimately prevails in big questions.

The Americans are in the mass hardworking people, more instructed in subjects which may be considered the fundamental education of the people than is the case with most European nations, and with a higher average moral level. The moral firmness of the farmers and of the population of the countryside forms a splendid bulwark against panics and errors.

When A. de Tocqueville wrote his celebrated book in 1833, he remarked on the absence of large fortunes in the United States, as a characteristic of the country. A century ago there were no really rich men there, and America was not only a democracy, but a democracy in the economic sense. The United States have now at least twice as many rich men as the whole of Europe put together, and very many more in proportion to their population. But this immense wealth is far from possessing the absolute power which it would have in Europe. It has to strive not to set itself against public opinion, in every action it undertakes.

In Europe there is always a ruling class, possessing the privileges of birth, wealth and tradition. In America, all these things have a minimum of importance. Public opinion is a much more important factor in politics than it is in any European country; and politicians, notwithstanding their personal opinions, take care not to alienate it, as far as they possibly can. It is public opinion which, on important occasions, such as the Presidential elections, selects its representatives.

Since the war, American public opinion has become suspicious of affairs which concern Europe, partly because a large part of the American Press persists in maintaining certain attitudes, with the result that facts are not always revealed to the public in their true light. Any proposal which assumes that the United States have any sort of responsibility for European affairs is immediately regarded with suspicion, or is repelled. There is a strong blend of humour in the American character, and for more than a century the United States have supplied the world with humorists of the first rank. Humour in America is not limited to any intellectual set, but exists in the very character of the people, whose conversation, even more than that of the English, from whom its character is derived, is full of humour. The Americans since the war mistrust Europe, but they mistrust it with a smile. I have found, in a very large number of American newspapers, nothing but humorous expressions employed to describe the peace, the future of Europe, and its efforts to relieve Uncle Sam of his dollars.

Many difficulties have to be faced to call the attention of American public opinion to the situation of Europe and to America's responsibility for the preparation of that detestable treaty which is a continuation of the war. There is the difficulty which springs from false ideas and false news disseminated during the war. There is also the inexact knowledge of what is now happening in Europe. Finally, there is the feeling that the preservation of the nation must be maintained by keeping American life outside European responsibilities, in which every kind of strife is fermenting and fresh wars are being prepared for.

During the Great War there came to Europe (or, one may almost say, to France) more than a million and a half of American citizens. These took part in the war in France, and heard it repeatedly stated that the Germans,

the "Boches," were barbarians. About fifty thousand Americans died in the war, fighting on French soil. At the present time, when France is trying to realise the imperialistic programme which was credited to German intentions, those who fought for her find some difficulty in recognising the fact, and sometimes wish not to recognise it. Can it be said that America would have lent her powerful aid to an unjust cause? Since the war, France, who always possesses the sympathy of many newspapers (which, of their own free will, and no doubt without interested motives, publish news and opinions from French sources), has sent to the United States her politicians, her generals, and her military missions. After a victory, it is pleasant to recall a war fought side by side. There has always existed a certain amount of confusion between the immediate past and the present. Those who cannot praise the present action of France fall back on reminiscences of the war. This is only an indirect method of facilitating French policy.

The war-propaganda has now given way to a peace-propaganda. One often finds many items of news in European journals, which emanate from one and the same source. Much is said in them about the egotism of Great Britain. It is she, they say, who has imperialistic aims. To-morrow, when Great Britain is no longer linked with France, she will be the ally of Germany, to whom she will supply weapons. In order to have a free hand against Germany, the German peril is invented or exaggerated. German scientists, it is said, shut up in their laboratories, are doing nothing but thinking out new weapons of attack and new forms of destruction. Civil aviation will transform itself in a flash into military aviation. The small German army allowed by the Treaty of Versailles is nothing but a nucleus from which an immense army will be formed. The dismemberment of Germany is therefore a necessity, just as the military

occupation is a necessity. Germany is determined not to pay the reparations, and it is for that reason that she is dissipating her finances and ruining her commerce. Russia, by the employment of German engineers, is refitting her military forces, and will try to crush Poland and unite with Germany. England, it is said, is turning a sympathetic eye on to Russia's policy. This news and these opinions are scattered sporadically and are found again in the most widely separated countries almost in the same words. Those of us who, as statesmen, have conducted war-propaganda, and who recognise the systems of the various countries and of the various political and financial groups, easily discover the origins of all propaganda which aims at arousing mistrust against England and personal animosity against Lloyd George as the man responsible for opposing the most unjust of the violations of the Treaty of Versailles, and the most unfair of the manœuvres against beaten Germany. I know this propaganda very well indeed.

In order to injure me in my own country, it has even been said that America wanted the port of Fiume for herself, and that I was the mouth-piece of American bankers; that I, who live by my own labours, have a hundred millions in America; that I, who, after Caporetto, reorganised the forces of my country in order to carry her to victory, I, who unearthed every possible means of resistance (in which no one believed), am a defeatist; that I, who, when my country was in the Triple Alliance, was for a long time the most tenacious opponent of German militarism in Italy, even when all bowed before it, am a friend of the Germans. Lloyd George and I understand this system of stirring up strife, which unfortunately succeeds in confusing and inflaming the public opinion of the world.

How is it possible to prevent these statements from attacking and poisoning public opinion even more widely?

When speaking in America, it is necessary, I think, to examine certain propositions which form the basis of the most common prejudices which, when reproduced, as they often are, in the press, are used to justify the acts of violence which have dishonoured the peace.

No person who is honest, or who is not blinded by prejudice and violence, can assert henceforward that Germany alone was responsible for the war. It is even doubtful whether Germany was more responsible than Russia; and no one can say that France, through the policy of such men as Poincaré, Delcassé, and Hanotaux, did not contribute considerably to it. The archives of Petrograd and Berlin have been opened and have given great surprises. Many publications have thrown a clear light on the policy and attitude of the various states up to the year 1914. Lloyd George has stated that all were partly responsible, and that we fell into the war almost without being aware of it. A series of mistakes, of illusions, and of resentments brought about the conditions which made war inevitable. But it is perhaps better not to speak now on these very delicate questions. A Central Commission for Neutral Investigation of the Causes of the World War has been set up at the Hague. This commission has in its composition representatives of Holland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, and is presided over by a jurist of great authority and impartiality, Doctor C. A. Renterskiold, who is professor of international law in the University of Upsala. The labours of this commission are of the greatest possible importance, and it must be provided with the widest possible opportunities for research.

I think, however, that it would be useful if the principal American universities, which have great resources at their command, were to constitute a new commission from their professors of modern history, entrusting to it the task of examining all the most important elements,

and of collecting into one large publication all the documents dealing with the factors which brought about the war. It is true that America took part in the war, but she took part in it from disinterested motives, and has not demanded either territorial or financial compensation. She believed in good faith that it was necessary (and I, too, think it was necessary) to crush the German imperialism of the Hohenzollerns. Now, however, she ought to know the whole truth, in order to be able to judge the conduct of the various European countries before, during, and after the war. An inquiry, conducted with all available resources on American soil by competent men, outside the heated atmosphere of Europe, would be a useful document for everyone, and would serve to show whether the statements contained in the Treaty of Versailles with regard to responsibility for the war correspond to actual facts, or whether they are rather, wholly or partly, a great lie, which has authorised the policy of reparations—a policy which is leading Europe to ruin by inspiring dreams of imperialism, and is augmenting disorder in production and exchanges, not to speak of the plunder and misdeeds to which Europe is of necessity lending herself. I have communicated this idea of mine to some eminent American historians and university professors. I hope that it will be taken up, in the interests of everyone, and especially of civilisation.

There is, however, no need for any research from now onwards to show the entire falsity of the idea which we disseminated during the war—it was necessary to our propaganda, just as poison-gases were a military necessity—that the Germans are the bellicose people of Europe, and that war is for them an industry, perhaps their greatest national industry. No research is necessary to give the lie to that. The most modest knowledge of history suffices to show us that no country has made so many wars as France; that France has for centuries

blocked the unity of Germany, just as she is now trying to dismember her; and that the prevailing quality of the French mind is the spirit of adventure and war. From the close of the Middle Ages until to-day France has always striven to expand towards the East and to reach the Rhine, and has tried by every possible means to absorb the Belgians. France has always been at war, and for centuries has had more years of war than years of peace. She has, however, preferred to attribute the responsibility to the Germans, on the lines of that feeling exemplified by Hume, by which one loves to attribute to one's enemies all the responsibility and all the blame. Poincaré has stated that France has been invaded by the Germans five times in a hundred and twenty years. Nothing can be further from the truth, and A. Von Gwinner has justifiably called him back to facts. Which are the invasions of which Poincaré speaks? Are they those which have taken place since the French Revolution? Is it not well to commence the inquiry a little earlier? Can it be said that Richelieu and Mazarin had no desire for aggrandisement or for conquests? That they did not do their utmost to destroy Germany, or that they hesitated to turn Europe into a battle-ground in order to accomplish their objects? In 1667, after the Thirty Years' War which had devastated Germany, Louis XIV., the representative of absolutism and of European domination, waged his first war and occupied a large part of Belgium; in 1671 he waged his second war; in 1683 he occupied Alsace; in 1688 he opened another terrible war which lasted for nine years; his armies ravaged the Palatinate with fire and sword, devastated the Margravate of Baden and forced their way as far as Würtemburg. The ruins of Heidelberg, of Speyer, of Worms, and of thirteen other German cities recall even to-day the military adventures of the French. In 1701, after the death of Charles II. of Spain, France, who had

her eyes on Poland and Spain, and who was placing princes devoted to herself on European thrones, put forward her claim to the Spanish crown. England, the Netherlands, Austria, and the German Confederation banded themselves together to resist her. There followed thirteen years of war, and the field of battle was Germany, which suffered all the damage. Finally, owing to the exhaustion of all parties, peace came; but a Bourbon, grandson of Louis XIV., ascended the Spanish throne. In the year following the conclusion of peace, Louis XIV. died after a long reign; and, just as he had come to the throne as a child, so he was succeeded by a child, his great-grandson Louis XV. As long as the latter was a child, Europe enjoyed a few years of comparative peace. In 1723, however, a new series of wars broke out, owing to the dispute about the succession to the Polish crown, to which the King of France wished to nominate his father-in-law Stanislaus Leczynski, who had become Duke of Lorraine by marriage. Had it not been for Frederick the Great and the victory of Rosbach, Germany would have been broken up before Napoleon's time.

After 1789 there began the period of the French revolutionary wars, which culminated in Napoleon's domination of almost the whole of the Continent. Three years after the fall of the Bourbons, the revolutionary government attacked its neighbours, and France declared war on Austria, which was protecting the *emigrés*, and occupied what is now Belgium. Prussia helped Austria, but probably had no warlike intentions, for her army did not get beyond Valmy—a position which carried the turmoil of battle on to French soil, as we read in the description given by Goethe. This engagement at Valmy is perhaps the only act which can be considered as a German invasion, and one can only remark that Prussia would have done better to leave Austria to face France alone. France, however, immediately afterwards occupied

Belgium and overran all the left bank of the Rhine. Afterwards, Napoleon was able to realise the ancient dream of France, *i.e.* the domination of Europe. For some years the whole of Europe was under the absolute rule of France. The relatives and kinsmen of Napoleon, men of very humble origin, occupied the thrones of ancient dynasties. Everyone knows what Napoleon's rule was like. It meant that almost all the peoples of Europe were brought into vassalage; that all had to pay tribute; and that all works of art were appropriated. In 1815 Blücher and Wellington overthrew the tyranny of Napoleon when he was worn out by the retreat from Russia, and the armies of the victorious allies entered Paris. Yet, although there were just and deep-seated motives for resentment, the victorious Russian, German and English allies did no harm to France. They did not reduce her territory; they did not take her colonies; they did not take her wealth. They left her free to arm herself and to follow at once the policy which she considered most suitable to her national interests. The Treaty of Vienna in 1815 was a model of nobleness and of justice compared with the ignoble Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which was the result of plunder and violence. It has always been said that the war of 1870 was willed by Prussia. It is difficult to say by whom it was willed, but it was certainly declared by France. In 1870, however, victorious Prussia did not demand from France the unjust terms which France wished to impose in 1919, and which have as their sole object the ruin of Germany, and the assurance of European domination to France. The question of responsibility for the last war will be examined, and sooner or later the truth will be established; but it is simply absurd to talk of the pacific spirit of the French and the militarist spirit of the Germans, or to contrast German schemes for domination with French longings for peace and democracy.

One of the greatest historians of modern France, C. Rousset, in his magnificent work on *L'esprit de conquête de la France*, admits that from Roman times no nation has turned its eyes to territorial conquests so much as the French; that they have been quite indifferent to the risk and the utility of such conquests, or as to what the subjugated peoples might think about them. The French believe, as in Napoleon's time, that the mere fact of establishing a large France compensates for all damage, and they show great indifference to the opinions of other nations. France, Rousset has said, has never considered deeply on the subject of fresh wars. The thought of war rather awakens within her a longing for fresh triumphs, so that she is always willing to second ministers and generals who are inclined to wars and territorial aggrandisement. It can be said that no other country in Europe except France would have followed Poincaré in his perilous and ill-defined plans of long military occupations, fresh invasions of German territory, and territorial aggrandisement at the expense of Germany.

Another eminent French contemporary historian, Driault, when considering *Les traditions politiques de la France*, has laid down the theory that, to break the chains of the nations and to set them on the path of the great ideals of humanity and civilisation, benevolent force (*la force bienfaisante*) must be used, together with an energetic penetration (*la pénétration à la manière forte*). It is this which lures Poincaré on into Germany, after broadcasting through the whole world the statement that the Germans are barbarians; that there is no such thing as a German nation; that Germany is *l'ennemi universel*, the enemy of Europe and of the world; that the annexation of the Rhineland, *i.e.* of eleven million Germans, is peace; that the Rhine is the frontier of civilisation, and that France is the guarantee of the world.

During the war, in 1916, Bodart published, under the auspices of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, an accurate statistical study of wars. This shows that France during the seventeenth century had 64 years of war and 36 of peace; during the eighteenth century, 52 years of war and 48 of peace; during the nineteenth century, 32 years of war and 68 of peace. In the three centuries up to 1914 she had had 148 years of war and 152 of peace, far surpassing England, Russia, and every other country of the world.

France has been for many years a synonym for war. After each victory, old aspirations have been revived, and they show a tendency to be revived again.

One of the most profound writers of France, A. de Tocqueville, well known to Americans for his magnificent work *La démocratie en Amérique*, wrote that the French nation adapts itself to everything, but excels particularly in war. It adores games of chance, violence, achievement, and clamour more than real glory. It is more capable of heroism than of virtue. It favours geniality more than good-sense. It likes rather to gaze upon grand objectives than to realise great undertakings. France is, of all the nations of Europe, the one most fond of show, and the most dangerous, and lends itself in a wonderful way to be the object of admiration, hatred, pity, or fear.—These words of de Tocqueville are full of truth even to-day, after the lapse of a century, and to a great extent explain what is now happening.

France is extremely sensitive; while she considers it a great honour for any people to belong to France (for which reason she strives after conquests), she considers it a crime for any fragment of her territory to be in the hands of a foreigner. She finds it perfectly legitimate that Savoy, the cradle of the kings of Italy; that Nice, the birth-place of Garibaldi; and that Corsica, where the language of Tuscany is still spoken, should belong to

France. She finds it perfectly legitimate that the Saar, where there are not a hundred Frenchmen out of seven hundred thousand inhabitants, should be allotted to France; but that any territory, even if it contains only a minority of Frenchmen, should be allotted to a foreign power, is an outrage on civilisation. Alsace and Lorraine are much-disputed provinces, and contain large nuclei of Germans; but France considered it a crime that they should belong to Germany. Yet France herself, through the medium of her most authoritative leaders, such as Marshal Foch and Hanotaux, who were for a long time responsible for her government, supports the annexation, or at least the autonomy, of the Rhine provinces.

To speak evil of one's enemies in time of war is "a military necessity"; but to continue to repeat the same things after the war which were permitted during the war is quite illogical, to say the least. To accuse the Germans of cruelty, and to keep alive the legend of German barbarity, after what has taken place in time of peace on the Ruhr, and after what the armies of occupation have done on the Rhine, is a grave error. War is violence; and, when national independence is not its object, it is also cruelty. *Dans toutes les guerres il ne s'agit que de voler*, says Voltaire. There is a certain amount of exaggeration in the statement; but it is true that war develops, in men of the lower type, the very worst instincts, which civilisation and religion had, if not destroyed, at least attenuated. I have examined impartially all the legends which grew up during the war. I have been convinced that atrocities were committed by all parties, even though they were committed to different degrees. The Germans committed atrocities on French soil, and the Russians on German soil. Cruelty and pillage in war are not confined to any one people. The thing to be done is to avoid war, for when man by his folly reverts to his primitive instincts of bloodshed,

there is no checking him. During the war we fostered every kind of legend that would tell against the Germans, as part of our propaganda. One of these legends, which made the tour of the whole world, was that of the cutting off of Belgian babies' hands. How many tears were shed, and how many shudders aroused at public meetings, by the news that the Germans were cutting Belgian babies' hands off! How many poems were written in execration of the new barbarians!

This legend grew so much that even sober-minded people still repeat it at political gatherings. Senator Glass of Virginia, when speaking in the American Senate on 16th February, 1923, called to mind the many atrocities of the new Huns, atrocities which surpass the human imagination. To my surprise, I did not find in this speech any mention of the Belgian babies' hands, although it contains other facts and stories which have almost the same foundation.

Immediately after the war, I decided to investigate the subject. I asked some of my friends, who were going to Belgium, to bring back the exact name and address of any baby who had undergone this terrible amputation. Lloyd George, for his part, had the same legitimate curiosity, and, when he went to Belgium he made all the inquiries he could on the same subject. Not one single case was discovered to authorise the legend.

After the war, a rich American citizen, who possesses considerable property in Cuba, expressed a wish to provide for the future of the Belgian babies whose hands had been cut off. He requested a friend of his to go to Belgium and make the most thorough investigation, but the friend returned to America without having discovered a single baby wilfully mutilated. Meanwhile, however, the legend still persists throughout the world, and propaganda has achieved its object, as was intended. Even in Italy a poem was written after the war by a school-

master, which was intended for his pupils. It recalls the martyrdom of the infant Belgians, and asserts that the Germans, who violate women and torture babies, must be put to death.

Everyone in the world of politics who is not devoid of honesty knows that the legend is false. Few, however, know that it had a very strange origin. The Belgians in their colonisation of the Congo were accused in 1895 of having committed great atrocities and of having cut off the hands, not only of grown-up men, but also of women and children, in order to intimidate the natives. On the 18th November, 1895, Murphy severely denounced these atrocities in the *Times* and was immediately supported by an American clergyman, the Rev. Joseph Clark. Sir Roger Casement, who was sent to the Congo by the British Government, at once confirmed the same facts that Glave, the companion of Stanley, had already brought to light in the *Century Magazine.* Thus we see that the Belgians themselves were accused of cutting off the hands of babies in Africa. Now, when the Belgians, through the medium of French propaganda, had to attribute acts of frightful cruelty to the Germans, they fell back on the very accusation which had been brought against themselves, and they had not to draw on their imaginations very much.

During the war, again, we used to say that Germany did not know what liberty meant. It is unfortunate that this foolish statement was repeated after the war. Few people on earth have a more intense love of liberty than the Germans; and no other nation, perhaps, has contributed so much to liberty of thought. It was from the vitals of the German nation that there arose the movement of Luther and the Reformation, in which the religious movements of Great Britain and the Anglo-Saxon countries had their origin. The insurrection of the Anabaptists was purely German, and the bold Dutch-

men who led the religious struggles were of German race. The German cantons of Switzerland were the rallying point of Swiss liberty, and the national hero of Switzerland, William Tell, was a German.

From the time of Giordano Bruno, the greatest thinkers, the greatest spirits, from Kant to Wagner, from Beethoven to Schopenhauer, have been of pure German origin. In the Middle Ages Germany had her popular leagues, her republics, and her communes jealous of their independence. It was under the pressure of war, and especially after the violent deeds of Napoleon, that the organisation which became the German Empire was framed, through the efforts of Fichte and the nationalist philosophers.

Germany in 1914 was the most archaic and yet the most modern state in Europe, She had voluntarily accepted a hard national discipline, just as is partly happening now in countries excited by victory. After her military collapse in 1919, Germany abolished all her monarchies and accepted the most liberal regime in Europe. Yet we continue to declare that the Germans are incapable of liberty, and to arouse the public opinion of the world against them, perhaps in order to prevent the consolidation of their liberal government.

The accusation of imperialism brought against Germany in 1914 was at least as just as that which is now being brought against France; but German imperialism existed only in intention, whereas French imperialism exists in reality and practice. I believe that France and Germany have undoubtedly nationalistic tendencies, but neither of them has the capacity for empire. The capacity for empire, that is, for a union of different peoples willingly accepting the same discipline for a long period of time, was the supreme gift of ancient Rome, and in our time it is the magnificent prerogative of the Anglo-Saxon peoples—Great Britain and the United States. This capacity for empire which is made up of dignity and

toleration—in knowing how to rule and how to tolerate; in knowing how to conquer and yet to make renunciation, in causing the spontaneous acceptance of unity and yet leaving to all their liberties—this wonderful faculty does not belong to the Germans or the French, but solely to the Anglo-Saxons. The imperial idea presupposes a sound national conscience, but excludes every species of nationalism, *i.e.* of intolerance of free expressions of nationality, of religion, and even of the traditions of each people. There are great peoples which lean towards nationalism, and great peoples which lean towards imperialism, but the national idea and the imperial idea are in a certain sense mutually exclusive.

Ancient Rome was from her origin the most imperial and least national of countries. She collected within herself every kind of energy and concentrated them all upon her grandeur. She allowed the highest posts and even the chief military commands to be held by men belonging to peoples who had united with her after lengthy wars. Some of the greatest figures of the politics of ancient Rome, and some of the very emperors, were not Romans, and were not even Italians. Wherever they went, the Romans sought always to maintain their prestige, and to diffuse the spirit of equality and respect for the Roman name. In spite of their numerous errors they always respected the religion of those they conquered, and during long periods of conquest only in few cases did they manifest intolerance or incompatibility with the vanquished. In Italy itself the formation of the Roman republic was a continuous work of expansion, a progressive and slow fusion of peoples.

Great Britain and the United States are, among modern peoples, the two great imperial countries.

The British Empire, almost 130 times as large as Italy, almost five times as large as the United States, includes the most varied peoples. It has Dominions, and it has

Colonies. The Dominions, which enjoy complete liberty, are for that very reason all the more linked to the mother-country, and therefore came freely to Europe to take part in the war, bringing with them their great contribution of men and treasure. Great Britain keeps the whole of India in order with a small army. More than 320,000,000 people are governed by a few Britons. The British military force scarcely reaches a total of 100,000 men. Great Britain brings with her a feeling of the *Pax Romana*. The Romans exhibited intolerance only for a few peoples, both within the Italian peninsula and without. England, similarly, has always encountered difficulties in her relations with Ireland. Yet wherever the English have gone they have gained more by their prestige than by military conquest. One can conquer large territories by war, but one cannot keep them for long without prestige. Now prestige, like sympathy and like respect, cannot be bought; it is the privilege of certain individuals and of certain nations.

The United States of America are an example of a great imperial nation. They have not had the need of carrying out a great imperial policy abroad, but the original nuclei of the American people, the Anglo-Saxons who form the core of the nation, knew how to bring about the conditions which would allow people of different race, different religion, and different nationality to live side by side. They knew how to create the spirit of a new people, which, under the unassuming name of the United States, includes human and economic forces of incalculable value. But how slow and wonderful has been the work of union, and what toleration and respect for the traditions and the feelings of each component race has been shown! What a wonderful constitution, which, together with a clear separation of powers and a wise system of poise and counterpoise, has respected whatever was worthy of preservation in each group and in

each state! One who knows the political constitution and life of America thoroughly has said that the central government and the governments of the component states may be compared to a great factory and to smaller buildings erected on the same ground and differing the one from the other; or to a vast church which rises over the roofs of more ancient chapels. The more ancient buildings have preserved their form and their identity, but the great building has united them all. If the new and larger church should happen to perish, the chapels would return without much difficulty to their former condition; but the great building rises from granite foundations. The Union is in the United States much more than an aggregate of states, and the states, too, are more than parts of the Union. To arrive at this colossal work two things have been particularly necessary—the breadth of mind and the tolerance which stamp the true imperial spirit. There are now forty-eight states in the Union, but the states which ratified the constitution between 1787 and 1790 were only thirteen in number. The American ideal is strongest in the United States. Yet there are 10,500,000 negroes compared with 95,000,000 whites; and the census of 1920 was able to distinguish, if not the older, at least the more recent groups of Anglo-Saxons, Germans, Irish, Slavs, Italians, and so on. The census showed that 13,712,154 of the population were born abroad, and that they have come from more than thirty different nations. But above them all rises America and the American ideal, and each group can develop quietly; each can live its own life and contribute to the common good. People sometimes speak in Europe of the harshness with which negroes are treated in the United States. I know no country where they are treated better, or where more efforts are made to raise their condition. They form, then, a tenth part of the total population. One can admit without hesitation that if there were 4,000,000 negroes

in France, or 7,000,000 in Germany, the persecutions which they would have to endure would cause them to be extinguished before many generations.

If the United States had been of exclusively French origin, they would never have attained their present form of government, which is based on a spiritual bond, and also on an imperial idea. The French and the Germans would have wished to conquer the others and denationalise them by violent means, because both of them are nationalistic nations and therefore not disposed to toleration. If the French are in possession of a district, they do not tolerate Germans for long, and *vice versâ*.

The French can create great military empires, as Louis XIV. tried to do, and as Napoleon did; but these empires end with their military successes, *i.e.* rapidly. The Germans have the power of expanding and of taking the place of their neighbours, but they have not the power to assimilate them, or at least they find it very difficult to do so. The Polish population which was subject to Prussia until 1914 was very easy to assimilate. Prussia, on the contrary, succeeded only in irritating the Poles and turning them into enemies, by oppressing them, and by the institution of a uniform Prussianism, not only in the schools, but in every sphere of life.

There are many people who look to Great Britain as their second fatherland, the land of their origin, the land from which their ideals spring. No people, however, even if in subjection for many years, ever feels the same towards France or Germany.

All the races which exist in the United States place America before everything; and the imperial process of fusion, which is preparing perhaps the mightiest force of humanity, is going on every day, in spite of many apparent errors. It is the result, before all else, of that tolerance which, to people filled with nationalist sentiments, seems

indifference or weakness, and yet which is the mightiest art of empire.

The greatest difficulty in the relations between France and Germany lies in the nationalist spirit of the two peoples, who for more than twenty centuries have been fighting on the banks of the Rhine. If these two peoples do not find some way of agreeing—a thing which is not only possible but is desirable, and perhaps even essential—they will continue to fight, to the great injury of the world's peace and to the great injury of civilisation, to which both have in their own way contributed from their national genius.

The immediate future is preparing an ever broader sphere of work for the Anglo-Saxons, and their influence will make itself more and more strongly felt throughout the world, in spite of fresh difficulties, fresh struggles, and changes of fortune which it is not easy to foresee. As they were the decisive factor in the world-war, so they can be the decisive factor in the world's peace.

CHAPTER II

FRENCH POLICY DURING AND AFTER THE WAR

Commendation of Democracy and Peace during the War; Imperialism after the Peace

THE declaration of war between Germany and Russia as a result of the conflict between Austria and Serbia was followed, in the bloody summer of 1914, by all the other declarations of war.

France, when accepting Germany's declaration of war, invoked an alliance in every shape and form against the barbarians. The violation of Belgium, and her bold resistance, supplied a legitimate motive for invoking the aid not only of countries which, like Great Britain, had signed the treaty of guarantee in 1839, but also that of all free peoples who were desirous of defending what civilisation and democracy had gained.

The Entente agreed, therefore, by solemn declarations, to uphold the noble and democratic character of the war. The free peoples were uniting against Prussian militarism and German imperialism, which were threatening the world.

France, always mistress of the art of propaganda (which has been in all ages one of the greatest weapons), made use of it in a wonderful way. De Maistre and Michelet revealed long ago how great is the power of French propaganda, which recoils from nothing, and which makes use of all the mistakes of its opponents.

The task was not very difficult in 1914, in view of the vulgar language of Wilhelm II.; the deplorable declarations of the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg; of

the Foreign Minister, Von Jagow; and of the odious character of the German military caste.

With the exaggerations which are natural in every war, but which, after 1914, assumed a form never before attained, everyone talked of destroying, in Germanism, the source of all wars. Germany, it was said, wanted to dominate Europe and control the world, the Pan-Germans wanted large slices of their neighbours' territory, the manufacturers wanted the control of raw materials, and Germany aimed at plunder, with cruelty as her means.

In order to find a parallel to what was said about the Germans during the war, one must perhaps go back to what was said in England about the French at the time of the Napoleonic wars. The English, says Thackeray, treated their French foe with terrible injustice, with scorn and jeers, and fought against him with every kind of vulgarism and heroism.

France, from 1914 onwards, diffused odium for the Germans throughout the world. They were wrong, declared Hanotaux, not so much for having let slip the dogs of war as for having opposed the principle of force to the principle of goodness, and for having tried to make humanity lose its faith in the evolution of its destinies. Germany was described as a power that lived on prey. Her *Weltpolitik* was the organisation of force in the service of conquest, and it threatened not merely Europe, but the whole universe.

The France who was opposing Germany was the defender of the rights of mankind, and was the most notable example of collective beauty (*le plus remarquable exemple de beauté collective*), declared a former French Minister for Foreign Affairs. What was Germany? Barbarism in a cloak of culture. What did the Germans want? To destroy all free nations and dominate the world. What did the German morality represent? Violence and crime. The Entente was fighting, therefore, to save the

principles of democracy, liberty, and self-determination of peoples. By conquering the Germans, humanity would destroy the very foundations of violence, and civilisation would be made secure from invasion by the new Huns.

It was true that the Entente included Czarist Russia, which, in matters connected with liberty and the self-government of peoples, had not a glorious past. It was true that Serbia, Russia's agent in the Balkans, before she was made the victim of an act of brutality, had never hesitated to commit violence. But who remembered such things? We were fighting against Germany and the violation of Belgium; and the nature of the war, from its declaration to its earliest encounters, was so anti-pathetic that it was easy to make the most exaggerated statements and get people to believe them.

The Entente declared its humanitarian principles in all its proclamations. There were two solemn declarations in particular, in which the Entente laid down its objects in the war, before America joined in the conflict. Both of these were made by Briand, not in the name of France alone, but in that of all the governments united for the defence and the liberty of peoples (*les gouvernements alliés unis pour la défense et la liberté des peuples*). The first was a joint statement to the American ambassador on 30th December, 1916; the second, even more important, was a note in reply to President Wilson on 10th January, 1917. It was this statement of objects, which constituted many pledges of the Entente, that led Wilson to adopt the policy leading to America's intervention.

These declarations are well known. As far as France was concerned, they included merely a demand for Alsace-Lorraine, *the restitution of the provinces and territories taken from the Allies in the past by force, or against the wish of their inhabitants*. It was a question, therefore, merely of *territories taken from the Allies* by force.

Wilson sincerely believed in these aims of the Entente. In fact, his first declarations in the direction of war, which date back to January, 1917, are nothing but paraphrases of the solemn statements of the Entente, and lay down almost identical principles.

America's participation in the war was a noble act, perhaps not altogether prudent, since it was not accompanied by suitable guarantees, and was based on an imperfect knowledge of events and circumstances. While the Allies were making solemn declarations of justice, liberty, and democracy in public, and were glorifying the principles of nationality and self-determination in public, they were making secret agreements, and were every day setting negotiations on foot for the conclusion of territorial, colonial, and other agreements, so as to come to an understanding as to the division of the spoils before the war ended. In public they talked about idealism, but all their agreements were based on a cynical practical policy. Wilson was unaware of these agreements, and only heard of many of them much later. He found out about some of them, including some of the most important, only when America's position was definitely compromised. If he had known about them before, he would have endowed America's intervention with a more prudent and wary character. It was necessary to destroy German imperialism, but not to create a militarism of an even more dangerous character, or to disintegrate the life of the whole of Europe.

While such noble language was being spoken in public, and while the defence of a democracy threatened by German violence was being proclaimed at Paris, secret agreements were being made between Russia and France. In the last of the Entente's proclamations, the one made at Paris, on 10th January, 1917, Briand was very circumspect on the subject of Poland. He contented himself with saying: "The intentions of His Majesty the Emperor

of Russia with regard to Poland are clearly set forth in the proclamation forwarded to his armies." This was indeed too little, and it was not until a year later, on 8th January, 1918, that Wilson, in the thirteenth of his celebrated and unfortunate Points, spoke of an independent Poland, to be composed of territories inhabited by people who were indisputably Polish.

To what was Briand's reserve due?

While France in public spoke only of Alsace-Lorraine, she was at the same time conducting fervid negotiations with Russia, in order to obtain her support and secure the whole of the left bank of the Rhine, *i.e.* of an entirely German territory. I can assert with confidence that, if that policy had been made known, the Entente would have come to an end, and America would not have entered the war, because the matter at stake was a much more serious affair even than the violation of Belgium. Naturally, France, owing to this fact alone, was bound to support all the plans of Czarist Russia, including those which concerned Poland and the East. One of Wilson's colleagues, Mr. Baker, has published many important documents on the Franco-Russian agreements made early in 1917. He published some of these in the *Manchester Guardian* on 12th December, 1917. I have collected other documents myself.

As the agreements about Poland had already been concluded, there was need for reserve. Russia, moreover, was to go to Constantinople and to take possession of the Dardanelles. The victory of the Entente without the fall of Czarist Russia would have been an incalculable misfortune for civilisation. Poland's servitude would have been renewed; Russia would have been supreme in the Mediterranean; and Italy would have been ruined. The mysterious force of destiny alone willed that the Entente should be victorious and that Czarist Russia should fall also. A reactionary Russia at Constantinople and in Asia

Minor, with the mastery of Poland, would have spelled ruin for European civilisation. Once the Pact of London, whose folly surpasses all belief, had been made, Italy, face to face with the Jugoslavs, and confined within the Mediterranean, would have found herself in a most terrible situation. Yet France supported all the demands of Russia, not merely out of hatred for Germany, but also, and before all else, in order that Russia might support all French demands for the possession of the Rhine.

After lengthy negotiations between Paris and Petrograd, a complete agreement was concluded, from 1st to 14th February, 1917, between Sazonoff, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the French ambassador at Petrograd. This agreement contains the fundamental demands of French policy on the following territorial points:

(1) Alsace and Lorraine were to be restored to France.

(2) The frontier was to be carried at least as far as the boundaries of the ancient Duchy of Lorraine, was to be fixed at the *discretion* of the French Government so as to provide for strategic necessities, and was to include the whole of the Lorraine coal-field *and the whole of the Saar coal-field.*

(3) The territory situated on the left bank of the Rhine, which to-day forms part of Germany, was to be entirely separated from that country, and *liberated* from all political and economic dependence on it.

(4) The territories on the left bank of the Rhine, outside the boundaries of France, were to constitute an autonomous, neutral state. Further, they were to be occupied by French troops until such time as the enemy had fulfilled the conditions and guarantees of the peace-treaties.

The Russian note, which repeated the claims of France and pledged Russia to support them, contained the programme which is now being followed. Poincaré,

President of the Republic in 1917, laid down the plan of imperialism which Poincaré, Prime Minister of the Republic, was to follow after the Saar had been torn away in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, after the referendum had been held, and after the occupation of the Ruhr, which constitutes a violation of the treaties, and a breach of international law much more serious than the violation of Belgian neutrality by Germany in 1914.

Hundreds of thousands of men from the democratic countries of the world, Englishmen, Americans, Italians, Canadians, Australians, and others, were laying down their lives in France in the belief that they were fighting for the right; Germany's resistance was beginning to give way, in view of the proclamations of the Entente, which exalted the principles of justice, and after the declarations of Wilson, which guaranteed them. But Germany would have given the last drop of her blood, the soldiers of the Entente would not have fought any longer, nor would America ever have intervened, if the Franco-Russian agreements of 1917 had been known.

Wilson knew nothing.

He did not even know of the Pact of London, concluded in the April of 1915 between Italy, France, Russia, Britain, and Japan. It was not even communicated to him when America joined in the war in 1917, just as it was never communicated to Serbia. Italy had entered into the war with high ideals and great nobility; yet none of the Italians, except a few Ministers, knew of the Pact of London, which was nothing but a gigantic error and a proof of a colossal lack of comprehension. Yet Wilson's profound aversion for that wretched treaty was due chiefly to the fact that he was not informed of it, or of any other secret agreement, when America became the decisive factor in the war.

The war, which had been proclaimed for sentimental

reasons, was immediately poisoned in almost every country by the demands of greedy and unscrupulous capitalists. There are in every nation speculative minds and speculatory minds. The latter often love their country ardently, but only as the maggot loves the cheese. During and since the war we have seen business men ready to give their lives for their country much more readily than to abandon their gains. Most of the violent acts committed by France are the result of the supremacy of an industrial and plutocratic caste which dominates the policy of the government by means of its banks, newspapers, and organisations, and makes every action of the Parliament very difficult.

The French iron trade, both during the war and more particularly during the peace negotiations, had its most able men either in the government or in close contact with it. One of these personally drew up the most unfortunate clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. The idea which sprang spontaneously to the minds of French business men was to appropriate the greater part of Germany's iron and coal, making use of victory as a means to this end. Alsace-Lorraine was the battle-cry for the people and for foreigners and Allies, or, as they were called, "associates"; but for business men the object was to ruin Germany's output of coal and iron, on which almost all of her industries depend. This policy had to be initiated by first acquiring the iron of Alsace and then the coal of the Saar. While men were still dying in the blood-stained trenches, and everyone was moved by the horrors of warfare, which is always uncertain and always terrible, the principles of the Entente were proclaimed in public on the 10th February, 1917. Yet in those very days the great disruptive policy of the French plutocrats was being prepared in secret by means of the Franco-Russian agreements of 5th to 14th February, 1917, which were the prelude to,

and paved the way for the policy of Versailles and the ruin of European life.

This double policy, to which the American Press has never given sufficient prominence, was carried to its highest point by Poincaré. He continued to speak in public about principles; to declare solemnly that France wanted nothing but the reparations promised by the Treaty; that no French citizen wanted an inch of German soil; and that France was not aiming at the dissolution of Germany; yet at the same time he was labouring with all his might to realise the programme of the iron and steel interests by means of the ruin of Germany.

Poincaré, who almost brought about war between France and Italy in 1911, and who bears the greatest part of the responsibility for the policy of violence and death, has had the habit, ever since 1914, of denying anything which might clash with his plans. When it is necessary he denies facts themselves; he denies what he himself has said. His fierce denials are disseminated throughout the world. There is in every country a press, disinterested of course, which publishes the same things in almost the same words. In appearance Poincaré was doing nothing but defend the interests of France, which wanted reparations; but in fact the Reparations Commission authorised every kind of error and violence in advance. The public does not know how great has been the cynicism and ignorance of the Reparations Commission up to now—a body composed of stupid men, directed by clever men, and so constituted as to be the instrument of every kind of strife and error. History will describe it as a collection of idiots, rewarded with large salaries, to serve unashamed the most greedy designs of plutocratic schemers.

I repeatedly asserted all these things, and revealed the French plans of conquest. Lloyd George confirmed them in newspaper articles corroborating my statements.

Poincaré immediately had the statements denied in the press. The strangest thing about it, and which makes it suspicious, is that he not only denied them to an ignorant public, but even at assemblies of the heads of the Governments of what was the Entente, and which has often been merely a collection of people with similar interests assembled to realise as far as possible the conditions laid down by impossible treaties.

In December, 1922, Poincaré gave a strong denial to the statements to which I have just alluded, and which Lloyd George had corroborated in his publications. This was at the time that he was planning a Franco-Belgian expedition to the Ruhr, which was at the same time one of the greatest violations of the treaties and a very grave economic and political error.

In a report on the session of 9th December, 1922, of the Conference of Prime Ministers held in London, there was a formal protest of Poincaré against Lloyd George. It is worth repeating in its entirety: "Poincaré protests energetically to the allied governments against the statement that France has any intention of annexing any part of Germany whatsoever. He wishes to declare, without leaving any possibility of doubt, that *there does not exist and cannot be found in France* a single man (not merely a responsible Minister, or a politician, but any man whatsoever) who has any idea of annexing any territory whatsoever inhabited by foreigners. Such an idea could never enter into a Frenchman's brain, and it is impossible to speak of any desire whatsoever to annex or incorporate the Rhineland within France. The error into which Lloyd George has fallen is incredible in a statesman of such long experience. He (Poincaré) must deny it energetically. When he spoke of pledges, he did not mean territorial pledges, in the sense of annexation or incorporation, whether at the present time or later on."

This declaration was reserved only for heads of govern-

ments; but, in a slightly different form, it was communicated to the press and reproduced in England and America. There are in England some of the finest and most respected newspapers in Europe. There are, however, some of large size or of great circulation which, on the other hand, are among the worst, and which stand for a factious, violent, Francophile conservatism, which is in sharp contrast with the British temperament. These newspapers generally support, no doubt by a mere coincidence of ideas, the objectives of the French iron and steel interests, and take great care to attenuate all Poincaré's mistakes, or to show them under a more favourable light. I remember what Austen Chamberlain said some years ago about these papers in the House of Commons, and how he described them in the plainest terms as organs of the worst and basest class. By a strange coincidence these papers generally favour the claims of France ever since the war, and often do not dissimulate their sympathy for Poincaré. There are bad newspapers in all countries, including America. They have all hastened to give great prominence to Poincaré's statements.

Millions of American and British citizens certainly experienced a sense of relief on reading that France, victorious by the common effort, had never thought of annexing any territory whatsoever not inhabited by Frenchmen. For this reason many consented without protest, and they tolerated without demur deeds such as the invasion of the Ruhr, which represents the decisive stage in French imperialism, and therefore the act most calculated to disrupt the life of Europe.

I can assert with a clear conscience that facts prove that not merely "one Frenchman whatsoever," but many of the most responsible Frenchmen, the leaders of their government, under the personal influence of Poincaré, have not thought either during the war, during the peace negotiations, or since the peace, of anything but the annexation to

France of purely German territories, mainly in order to realise the programme of the iron and steel interests, *i.e.* the domination of the coal and iron of Europe, and thence the military supremacy. I could cite an infinite number of documents and publications, of some of which the public and even politicians are still ignorant. I could refer to statements which have been made to myself, and not by "any French citizen whatsoever"; I could bring forward a series of facts which the public, especially in America, does not know; but I wish to deal only with facts and documents which the public can easily verify.

The Franco-Russian agreement of 1st February, 1917, was concluded *during the war*, while the public was still being addressed in different language; while those who were fighting for the Entente were being assured of principles of peace and justice, and while Poincaré, too, who now denies the most evident facts, was President of the French Republic. What did that agreement lay down? As we have seen, Russia pledged herself to support France, not only on the question of Alsace-Lorraine, but in all her demands for strategic boundaries, *i.e.* for a boundary which should include German peoples. This boundary was to be fixed at the *discretion* of France. Russia pledged herself to support France in her demands for the cession of the whole of the Lorraine coal-field (*i.e.* even that part of territory which belonged to Germany before 1870, and which is, more than any other territory, undoubtedly German) and in her demands for the cession of the Saar, where, among 700,000 Germans, there were less than 100 Frenchmen, who were there for business reasons. She pledged herself also to support France in her demands for severing from Germany the German territories on the left bank of the Rhine, *i.e.* of 11,000,000 German citizens, compelling them to form themselves into an autonomous state, with no political or administrative link with Germany, and with a French army in occupation

for an indefinite period of time. Poincaré cannot deny that these demands were made by him and Briand, both of whom are undoubtedly French citizens. Further, they were made without the knowledge of the Allies, through the medium of French citizens at the French embassy at Petrograd.

During the peace negotiations innumerable attempts were made to sever territories from Germany and unite them to France. I will confine myself to quoting only two of them, on account of the really authoritative position of the people who took part in them.

Gabriel Hanotaux, ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs, a member of the French Academy, and at the present time representative of France on the League of Nations—it is easy to imagine what kind of representative—drew up, immediately after the victory, a series of notes to indicate what pacts the French government should demand at the armistice and in the peace-treaty. His ideas represent the average ideas of the French politicians, who, from the alliance with Russia up to 1914, played so large a part in the events which paved the way for the European War. They are also the ideas of the Quai d'Orsay.

The first armistice terms were drawn up rapidly, and forwarded to Marshal Foch on 1st November, 1918. After having set out all the military clauses, some of which were vexatious and needlessly offensive, Hanotaux particularly insisted on the necessity for a long occupation, which, even though not a permanent occupation, *peut conduire à des effets plus durables*. What are these results?

After the signing of the armistice, however, Hanotaux expressed his opinions in some important memoranda. The first, addressed to the Foreign Minister, Pichon, is dated 11th November, 1918. The whole question, he says, is whether to make *a little peace* or *a great peace*; the second is preferable. The conflict with Wilhelm II. is nothing but the continuation of the conflict with

Charles V. and Philip II. of Spain (*i.e.* a conflict for the domination of the whole of Europe). The frontier necessary for the security of Europe is the Rhine; and that frontier is laid down in every detail by Hanotaux. The essential thing is the Rhine: *si la Belgique et la France sont considérées comme les soldats du droit sur le Rhin, la véritable frontière, la frontière européenne, c'est la frontière naturelle, ethnique, historique de l'ancienne Gaule—le Rhin.* The soldiers on the Rhine, or, to express it better, the soldier on the Rhine, by asking for a non-natural, non-ethical, non-historical frontier, concerned himself with things of which the ancient Gauls knew nothing, or of which they took no count—iron, coal, and the vast interests of the iron and steel interests.

On the same day, 11th November, 1918, Hanotaux forwarded to Marshal Foch, and afterwards communicated to Pichon, a memorandum in which he made even clearer the programme which France was to follow. First of all, he expressed his regret that an attempt was being made to preserve the unity of Germany. *Mon impression est qu'il y a concert entre Guillaume II., Max de Bade, Ebert et consorts pour sauver l'unité allemande à tout prix et même les chances de la dynastie;* whereas the ideal *pour la paix du monde* would be a Prussia reduced *à sa plus simple expression* (*i.e.* entirely mutilated), with a Germany composed of six or eight states (why not more?) each of from ten to twenty million people, with no bond between them except a common Diet. Any concession towards peace which did not tend towards the disruption of Germany was useless and injurious. The inter-allied occupation (*i.e.* really a French occupation) should not be limited to the Rhine, but should reach to the Elbe. *J'avais demandé l'occupation jusqu'à l'Elbe, mais à la rigueur celle qui est établie par l'armistice peut suffire.*

Nothing effective could be done, however, without entering into Germany's internal politics. The Government

des Ebert et consorts, n'existe à nos yeux qu'autant qu'il est de notre intérêt à le reconnaître. The democratic and republican government which Germany had given herself after the war must therefore be humiliated, by recognising it or not recognising it according to the demands of French interests; and, after the armistice, it was necessary to avoid *autant que possible de traiter avec l'Allemagne unifiée.*

That is what France has done. For a long time after the armistice she required the victorious nations to speak to the Germans through the medium of military commissions, and to ignore the German government. For many months she refused to nominate an ambassador at Berlin, and requested Great Britain and Italy not to nominate their diplomatic representatives. Lloyd George and I wished to break with all delay, and I had to raise the question at the Conference of London in a tone of distress, and to declare that Italy could not wait any longer, because an international duty was at stake. According to Hanotaux, peace must not be made with the German government, but with all the people of Germany: *nous désirons les entendre tous.* When Cambon, at the signature of the Peace Conference, asked whether Bavaria was signing separately, he did not merely fall into a simple mistake, as he tried to show afterwards. It was only the attitude of all the other countries which prevented the moral and juridical absurdity of making *les tractations séparées*, of which Hanotaux was an ardent supporter. At the very time when France was claiming the right of talking to the Germans by any other than diplomatic channels, I, as Prime Minister of Italy, received an official request from France to nominate not only an ambassador at Berlin (whom they wished to nominate as late as possible), but also Ministers of Legations and representatives in Bavaria and other German states. This was an attempt to initiate the work of

disruption. Naturally, I paid no heed to this request, but rather convinced myself of the necessity of nominating an ambassador at Berlin more quickly, and made fresh representations to Lloyd George to get Great Britain to do the same. The French programme was, therefore, to concern itself with the internal politics of Germany, to excite separatist movements, and to rouse discontent among the Germans in order to divide them. The Germans indeed were to experience the pleasure of being in servitude to France. The French armies of occupation were, in a certain sense, to take part in the felicity of the occupied territories: *quand nous serons en Allemagne, les peuples se sentiront délivrés plus encore que conquis.* Hanotaux himself summed up what he considered the conditions essential to a real peace:

1. To bring Germany back to her natural (why natural?) federative life. This meant the dismemberment of Germany, and the arousing of internal revolts, as was afterwards done in the Rhineland and Bavaria. It was natural that Germany should be a federative state, and yet it was natural for the victors to have unitary and central governments.

2. To confine Prussia to its original boundaries (original from what date?), and to set up in Germany and Austria a certain number of states based on the consent of their inhabitants (how obtained?), and with an average population of from ten to twenty millions.

3. *To separate from Germany* Hanover and its inhabitants; also Schleswig and Poland, which had been acquired by Germany by conquest (at what date?).

4. To abolish the clause about nationality, *i.e.* to increase the separation between the new German states.

5. To obtain the essential results, *i.e.* the pacts already indicated, by making use of all available weapons, such as military occupation, provisioning, conditions of peace, and also, by the irony of words, *propagande de liberté.*

I consider it very difficult for Poincaré to assert that no French citizen has ever thought of possessing any foreign territory. In order to admit the truth of his assertion, one would have to declare that Poincaré himself is not a French citizen—a thing which would be somewhat difficult to prove. A more serious consideration is that the ideas of Hanotaux and Poincaré represent the tendencies of those most responsible for French foreign policy, the ideas of Foch and the most responsible military leaders.

I have re-read all the documents which refer to the Peace Conference at Paris in 1919. I was afraid that my memory might have played me false on some point. It is clear from these documents that, at the meeting of the Entente leaders (including President Wilson), Marshal Foch, who is undoubtedly a French citizen, strongly insisted that the Rhine should form the western boundary of Germany, *i.e.* that eleven million Germans should be cut off from their native land, handed over to France, and placed, directly or indirectly, under her dominion and control.

A. Tardieu, who was one of the French signatories to the Treaty of Versailles and a responsible Minister, presented to the Peace Conference on 12th March, 1919, a memorandum, since published by France herself, in which he, undoubtedly at the instigation of his government, asked that the boundary of Western Germany should be fixed at the Rhine. All this, too, was, by the irony of words, to be done *in the interests of peace.*

Poincaré cannot be ignorant of all this, because, as he was President of the Republic, he inspired or acquiesced in these methods. In France the President of the Republic forms part of the Council of Ministers, and is therefore perfectly informed of all ministerial undertakings.

The attempt which was initiated at Petrograd during the war, and continued at Paris during the armistice and

the Peace Conference, was followed afterwards by a series of acts all directed to the same end, I have been able to follow not only the newspaper reports, which permit of no doubt, and the speeches of deputies and senators, but also the reports of political agents and military commissions. Demands for reparations, military occupations, diplomatic action, and armaments, all have been directed towards the same objective—to disorder Germany, to promote the spirit of revolt, to smash the national economy of Germany, to undo German unity, and to pave the way for French control of coal and iron, and therefore for the military primacy of the Continent.

The most characteristic and also the most grave of these numerous documents is the report of Adrien Dariac, ex-President of the Financial Commission of the French Chamber. The report was published by the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and by the *Manchester Guardian*, but by no Italian newspaper. In France, one single newspaper, as far as I know, made a timid reference to it. The discipline of the French Press on matters of foreign policy is so great that the most absolute silence was maintained about the publication. The American newspapers have said nothing about the document, either because it has escaped their notice, or because they have not realised its importance.

Everyone knows how great an authority the President of the General Financial Commission has in France, and that the government policy cannot be fixed without his concurrence.

A. Dariac, in his report, first of all notes with satisfaction, that the French troops on the Rhine, which are maintained by Germany, give an impression of strength and comfort. It is an army, says the report, which is neither on a war-footing nor on a peace-footing. Its mission is one of eventual coercion against a recalcitrant

debtor. The occupation of the Düsseldorf bridge-head, and of the cities of Düsseldorf, Duisburg, and Ruhrort, which was executed in accordance with the agreement of London of 5th May, 1921, would not have been effective if it had not been followed by the occupation of the Ruhr, which has very great natural wealth and is the centre of Germany's industrial life. Coal, iron, steel, chemicals, dyes, scents, pharmaceutical productions, and everything that makes the superiority of German industry, depend on the Ruhr. It is by means of the industry of the Ruhr that Germany can buy from abroad the food supplies which she needs. France, says Dariac, must not abandon the guarantee provided by the Ruhr, and Germany must be required to surrender part of the capital of all her trading companies. The Rhine separates two great metal-working regions, the French and the German. An association may be considered, but it must be under the control of France This programme must be followed by the separation of the Rhine provinces. Now this separation cannot be brought about without a long military occupation, and this occupation is not the one which is permitted by the treaties. A judicial comparison is brought forward, by which the failure of a debtor to pay his creditor gives the latter a right to claim his goods as a guarantee. Germany does not pay, France therefore takes her territories. The policy of France would be facilitated by freeing the inhabitants of the Rhine provinces from the prospect of being re-united with Prussia. For this plan to succeed, the Rhineland must be included within the French customs-area, officials devoted to Prussia must be dismissed, and the powers of local authorities must be increased. These, observes M. Dariac, are *undoubtedly ambitious projects*; the policy is far-reaching and clever diplomacy is needed. As for the Saar, the people remain German and are attached to Germany, in spite of the policy of France.

This state of affairs must be modified by a series of measures, and by a methodical and prudent policy.

During the war France proclaimed that she was fighting for the liberty of peoples, and asked help from all free peoples. During the peace negotiations she asked for military guarantees from other nations, and expressed a desire to avoid all future wars. After the war she declared that she wanted nothing from Germany except reparations. Yet all this time, and in spite of the assertion of Poincaré, she had only one object, one determination, one final goal—to destroy the political and economic unity of Germany, to surround herself with vassal states, and to aim at the military hegemony of the whole of Europe by means of a control over the coal and iron of the Continent.

Poincaré is the most typical representative of French nationalism. He believes, more than anyone else, that every people should consider itself honoured merely by belonging to France. His policy was one of the causes of the war, and not one of the smallest of them. His personal policy was one of the chief causes of the ruinous peace concluded at Versailles. He denies even the most evident facts; all his speeches are nothing but an appeal to hatred; all his assurances of peace are nothing but a new incentive to war; his every act is directed to the same end.

In order to sustain this policy it was necessary to separate the policy of France from that of Great Britain, to bind Belgium, and to increase the state of dependency of those states which were made by the war or enlarged after the war, and which, from the fact that they included within their boundaries an enormous foreign population, were already inclined by instinct to sustain the integrity of the treaties and therefore the policy of France.

It was, however, above all things, necessary to have *the means* to justify a policy of violence and *the force* to

support it. The policy of reparations was the means. It provided a method of occupying new territories in violation of the treaties, of dissolving Germany's economy, of crushing her prosperity, and of justifying violence of every kind. America and all the world could always be told that it was simply a policy of obtaining pledges, and that France was in the Ruhr merely in order to exact payment. It did not matter even if no payment was obtained. How could a citizen of Alabama or Nevada, even though he had been in the war, interest himself in these differences?

The force was necessary—such force as should prevent every attempt at resistance on the part of the vanquished, and such as should paralyse any policy of peace put forward by Great Britain, who was constrained rather to defend herself than to intervene in continental affairs. Thus France, notwithstanding the very grave condition of her finances, has developed her army to a formidable degree, even though the enemy have fallen and are unarmed. She has also developed her submarines and has built up the most formidable military air-force that now exists. At the same time she has the largest and most efficient army in the world. This sacrifice has been all the greater in that the physical exhaustion of her people since the war has been great. France has a lower birth-rate than any other civilised state. She suffered very great loss of human life during the war, though in smaller proportion than Germany or Hungary. Yet, notwithstanding her great economic resources, her finances are in an extremely grave condition and tend to get worse. The French nation, deceived by its Ministers, or by some of them, as to the possibility of obtaining reparations from Germany, has imposed upon itself scarcely any of the sacrifices which have been accepted with resignation in England and Italy.

The means and the force, therefore, exist at the present

time; but resistance is growing every day, and the programme of destroying Germany and of obtaining for France the leadership of the Continent has no other practical result than that of undoing the whole of the economy of Europe, and of preparing new and terrible causes of revolutions and wars.

The French nation has been deceived.

Some Ministers made it believe that Germany's indemnity would pay all the expenses of the war and would restore French credit immediately to its powerful position. Others, including Poincaré himself, told the nation that not only would the indemnity pay all the expenses of the war, but that it would enrich France to such an extent that not only would existing taxes be lowered, but also that lower taxes would be needed than before the war.

Great Britain, after her first mistakes between November, 1918, and the following April, recognised the truth. She accepted the most exacting taxation, and the severest sacrifices. She endured the fall of many industries and still has an enormous amount of unemployment. In spite of all this, she has regulated her American debt without showing herself too exacting to her greatest debtors, France and Italy; and she has openly declared that the best indemnities consist of the resumption of the conditions of normal life.

In France, in spite of the enormous war-profits, which enriched certain classes and certain individuals to an extraordinary degree, transferable and untransferable wealth are largely divided out. The majority of the citizens, even those in the most modest walks of life, possess Government bonds. These bonds are very numerous. Before the war France had the largest national debt in the world; but at the present time this debt, owing to its vast dimensions, cannot be compared with that of any other country, if we except the

bankrupt countries in which the extreme depression of the currency deprives figures of their value.

For the French militarist and nationalist policy to be possible, it was necessary to instil into the people a series of ideas, which have been the object of the policy and propaganda of Poincaré, Barthou, and all the most responsible leaders:

1. That Germany is extraordinarily rich and must pay reparations sufficient to cover not only the damage done in the devastated areas and war pensions, but also a considerable part of the war expenditure.

2. This part must be so considerable as to compensate for the deficit in the national budget and to provide the means of lowering France's pre-war taxes.

3. Too many sacrifices must therefore not be imposed on the French taxpayer, but all efforts must be concentrated on the exaction of reparations at all costs.

4. If Germany does not pay, and if her non-payment is intentional, every reprisal is justified; and if she does not pay because she cannot pay, that authorises the seizure of the property of German citizens as pledges, *e.g.* coal, iron, and the capital of German firms.

5. That reparations provide French industry with the means of occupying the post of German industry by means of the control of coal and iron.

6. Military action is closely linked with economic action, and, in order to set France free from debt and from fiscal burdens, there is need for military action, and therefore for a large army, to bring the whole of Europe into complete subjection, and for submarines and an air-force to paralyse any effort made by England in the cause of peace.

7. France must, as far as possible, act in unison with her former allies, but, if necessary, she must act alone, not troubling about the public opinion of the world.

8. By controlling Belgium, Poland, and Czecho-

Slovakia, and by maintaining friendly relations with the new states which arose from the war, and which are desirous of defending the integrity of the treaties in order to keep the German and Hungarian territority which they arbitrarily annexed, France need not trouble about the action of Great Britain, and must confine herself to not estranging American public opinion, by continuing to proclaim, in all statements intended for abroad, those principles which America accepted when she entered the war.

9. All disorder produced in Germany by movements of the army of occupation, by military violence, and by disruptive propaganda, contributes towards the realisation of territorial designs and at the same time of economic plans.

10. The special conditions of France and the variety of her productions permit her not to be excessively alarmed at the ruin of her exchanges, and permit her to live on her own resources in the catastrophe which must necessarily be produced in Europe, and from which France hopes to emerge as mistress of every situation.

This is certainly not a decalogue of peace; it is not laid down with sincerity, and it is often denied. Yet these are the ideas which are inspiring the political policy of France, which are being diffused among the people and are making a war-policy possible. Bastiat has said that in social affairs *il y a ce qu'on ne voit pas*; but if that which is visible in the policy of France is clear, that which is invisible is beginning to be clear also.

The first French demands for reparations were made when Poincaré was President of the Republic. It is well known that all the French economists estimated the total wealth of the French nation before the war at from 250 to 300 milliard francs at most. The German invasion and the destruction which it caused covered only a small part of the French territory. Immediately after the

Treaty of Versailles, which had taken from Germany all her transferable wealth and the greater part of her resources, the French Minister of Finance, Klotz, made a statement in the Chamber by which the German indemnity was to be fixed at 375 milliards. The interest was to accumulate until 1921. After 1921, Germany was to pay her debt in thirty-four annual instalments of 25 milliards each, of which 13·759 milliards were to go to France. Later, towards the end of 1920, even when people were able to reason a little better, French ministers were bold enough to claim that the share of France should amount to 218 milliards—141 milliards for damage done, and 77 milliards for pensions. Attracted by this, Belgium, which was already completely under French influence, not wishing to be outdone, demanded a war indemnity almost equal to the total wealth of the nation according to her statistical Annual and the publications of the Ministry of Finance, just as though she had been overwhelmed and all her wealth had disappeared.

These extravagant demands, which aroused the greatest aversion amongst all the financiers of the world, and which only appeared ridiculous, had nevertheless a political object. They were intended to give the people the conviction that France and Belgium could not only obtain the repayment of their war expenditure, but also additional and greater wealth. Every military action was therefore justified, every act of violence not only lent itself to the exaltation of the national pride, but also helped to reassure the thrifty poor who in France, and also in Belgium, form the majority of the population.

Poincaré wanted to go even farther than that. He upheld the theory that not only ought France not to support fresh burdens as a result of the war, but she ought to be better off than before and to reduce her former taxes.

On the 1st July, 1920, Poincaré published an article

in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which was quite a revelation to me. I had resigned the direction of the Italian Government a few days previously. The reading of that article made such an impression on me that I brought it to the notice of some of the leading politicians of America. Poincaré, after a series of observations and opinions on the policy of the Entente, declared that it would be *intolerable* that France should pay in the future the same taxes as before the war, and that it would also be a paradox. At first I thought that there was a mistake in the article; but its text was very clear and the programme admitted of no attenuation. *Ce serait un intolérable paradoxe qu'après une guerre victorieuse, le pays eût à supporter encore des charges comparables à celles qui pesaient sur lui avant ses quatre années d'épreuves.*

What did those words mean?

Germany would have to pay, under the name of reparations, not merely a sum which would represent the losses of the devastated areas and the burden of the war pensions, but would also have to pay for the whole cost of the war, and, after doing so, would have to make such payments to France as would enable her to reduce her *pre-war* taxes. Just as France wishes to occupy German territory for a long time, just as Poincaré maintains that the occupation has not yet been begun in the sense laid down by the treaties, and just as France is enlarging her army, so Germany, in order to permit of the reduction of French taxes to less than they were before the war, would have to provide, by means not stated, but which would involve the surrender of private property, the money necessary to make that reduction.

The French Press is to a large extent controlled by war financiers, *i.e.* by war speculators. How then could the army of thrifty poor in France be anything but dazzled by a programme which, even if it contains nothing substantial, is such as to arouse the minds of

ignorant people? Thus is explained the fact that the French nation has followed one by one all the steps in that programme of violence which the men of liberal minds and calm judgment who have opposed that policy in their own country have found so great an obstacle.

The whole of France's activities against Russia has not been inspired by fear of Bolshevism, but by a desire to profit by the difficulties of the Russians and induce them to accept a kind of financial control and to make concessions in payment of French credits. The demands made at the Conference of Genoa by Barthou, leader of the French delegation, bear a great resemblance to a demand for a system of capitulations, which would have made Russia lose the standing of a sovereign state. These demands, which the Russians firmly rejected, are not entirely known to the public, and ought perhaps to be published.

France has, to the same end, fomented in Russia every kind of reactionary movement for the restoration of the infamous Czarist Government, and has armed all the expeditions which have failed miserably one after the other. The Russian people has not aided them because it knows that Bolshevism, in spite of all its horrible errors and its crimes, has prepared the peasant-cultivators to become the proprietors of the soil, and has laid the foundations of a democratic constitution which will come into force sooner or later. The Russian people accepts everything except a return to Czardom, which would mean the restoration of a form of government more like the worse despotisms of the Mongols than a government suited to civilised peoples. Nothing more abominable than the government of the Czars can be imagined. When the war broke out, Russia was governed by a good but stupid sovereign, who was made to commit every kind of error by the military caste, the Grand Dukes, the Court, and the clergy. The Grand Dukes were often corrupt

drunkards and robbers, and the Ministers generally obtained their positions by intrigue. The transportation to Siberia of the flower of the Russian intellect—it will be sufficient to remind Americans of Kennan's book —the atrocities practised against the Jews, the acts of violence against the intellectuals were an everyday occurrence. Even the atrocities attributed to the Bolsheviks are nothing but the continuation of a system of violence and crime which was carried out in the name of the law by the Czarist Government. France, none the less, has been the only country in the world which has not only openly helped the attempts to restore the Czarist Government, but has also supplied arms to General Wrangel, and has recognised him as head of the lawful government of Russia.

For the same reasons, in order to reduce Germany, to dismember her, and to throw East Prussia into disorder, France decreed, in the Treaty of Versailles, that there should not be formed the ethnical Poland which we all desired, and which France alone desired only moderately when she declared, on 10th January, 1917, that *on the question of Poland, one must refer to the proclamation forwarded by the Czar* to his armies; but that there should be formed a great Poland, almost half of which was composed of non-national elements. Afterwards, she urged the Poles to that imperialist policy which will inevitably be their ruin. Thus was constituted that arrogant, militarist, imperialist Poland, which, together with Czecho-Slovakia, has for a long time had many more men under arms, in proportion to her population, than any other country in the world; which brought about the referendum to partition Upper Silesia, which aspires every day to acquire fresh Russian territories, and which every day commits intrigues and violent acts like those of Vilna and Lithuania. It is an unfortunate people, which is repeating on a vaster scale the errors which

were its ruin, and which is undertaking the most absurd of tasks in the service of French militarism—to separate permanently the two largest and most prolific nations in Europe, the Germans and the Russians, and to profit by their difficulties and their disarmament in order to hold them in subjection.

France has adopted different attitudes in her foreign policy, which is closely linked with military activities.

At first she showed no other care but that of taking steps against a possible policy of revenge on the part of Germany. Germany must be disarmed and the safety of France guaranteed. There was no idea of conquest, but merely a necessity to obtain security. All the countries which had taken part in the war agreed in demanding complete disarmament, often with absurd methods. Germany has, and can have, only an army which is scarcely sufficient for her internal security. She has no military staff, a very small artillery, and scarcely any navy, that which she has being barely sufficient to police her coasts. She has no military conscription and no military air-force. Under the pretext of disarmament, not only have all her war industries been destroyed, but also her factories for the manufacture of sporting-guns, and even large quantities of sporting-guns intended for exportation. Yet when the Treaty of Versailles was signed, France obtained from the United States and Great Britain a guarantee against any future invasion. However, when the American Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles, the treaty of guarantee fell with it as a consequence, and the British guarantee, which depended upon that of America, fell also. It is very characteristic that Italy's guarantee was never asked for in 1919 or afterwards, as France preferred to have in her hand the new Slav states, which had opposed Italy from the very first.

When Germany had entirely and loyally laid down her arms, and the allied troops had occupied the left bank of

the Rhine for a period of at least fifteen years, one might have thought that no alarm for the future was possible. On the contrary, there was initiated in the press an alarmist campaign which was intended to justify every kind of violence, and which aimed at making possible the development of armaments both in France and in her satellite states. It was said that Germany was preparing for war with new and terrible weapons, and that Russia and Germany were confederates. Germany's civil aviation, it was said, would be transformed into a military air-force at a flash; while German scientists were preparing in their laboratories new and terrible weapons of destruction. Not only was all this untrue, but it was true, on the contrary, that there was no understanding between Russia and Germany, and that Germany, after having laid down her arms, could not think even of resistance, much less of war, without showing a clear determination to commit suicide.

Sometimes things were done which one would think possible only from the pen of a master of irony like Sterne. Germany has a shortage of manures. France has in some cases, as in the Saar, failed to make use of large quantities of manure, in order to injure Germany's production without any advantage to herself; whilst at the same time Germany is faced with the necessity of stimulating her production of foodstuffs, as she cannot, on account of her ruined exchanges, buy from abroad the food which she lacks.

At the Conference of London, on 11th December, 1922, Poincaré put forward an explanation of the French armaments, which have attained ludicrous proportions. After having distributed to the members of the conference two documents dealing with the non-delivery of timber, coal, paving materials and nitrogen, Poincaré added: "This last point is particularly important, because the refusal to deliver the nitrogen reveals dangerous designs.

There can be no doubt that Germany's industrial requirements do not justify her enormous production of nitrogen, which *seems* to be designed for the manufacture of poison-gas."

No other poison-gases were being manufactured throughout Germany but those of popular discontent and hatred; but Poincaré made use of nitrogen to explain —the French air force, the enormous development of which was not brought about by any fear of Germany. When Rutherford discovered nitrogen in the air in 1772, he did not foresee what a source of humour he was laying bare to certain French statesmen.

In a large part of the European Press much is still spoken of the hidden dangers of conquered Germany; and manufacturers who grew rich on the war take care that their newspapers talk continually of the danger of future German competition, as though it were possible for Germany to pay big reparations and at the same time to make her industries decline.

This campaign, however, although conducted with great ability, bears a close resemblance to the policy followed during the war, when high-sounding principles were declared in public, and agreements were made in secret to appropriate the goods of the vanquished after the victory, and to acquire associates in this work without the knowledge of the other allies, who continued to think that they were fighting for the principles proclaimed by the Entente.

In order to increase her army and her submarines, and to expand her air force to a formidable extent, France has made use of facts which concern, not Germany, but other states, which until yesterday were allied against danger. In this way she has succeeded in urging Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Belgium and Jugoslavia to arm themselves—especially the two last-named, which, since the war, have had the largest armies on earth in proportion to their

population and resources. Public opinion in Belgium has been militarised. Generals Foch and Weygand have concluded military agreements in almost all the satellite states, and a military treaty with Czecho-Slovakia. It has also been possible to increase the suspicion with which Russia is regarded. After having tried to beat her in the field by making use of Poland, and of insurrectionist armies paid and armed by the Entente, especially by France, attempts have been made to strangle her. A number of news-agencies, especially those of a certain section of the press, give always the same news, preferably on the eve of a fresh military occupation of Germany or of a meeting of Prime Ministers. Reports are circulated that people are dying of famine almost everywhere throughout Russia; that Russia is a heap of ruins; that Petrograd is periodically in the hands of insurgents and Moscow in flames. Almost all of the leaders of the Russian government are periodically stricken with frightful diseases, which must inevitably conduct them to the grave, but which leave them still alive when the occupations are completed or when the conference of Prime Ministers terminates. The sources of information of certain newspapers can be seen at once from their periodical statements about Germany's determination not to pay; about the hidden German peril; about the ever imminent fall of the Bolsheviks, etc.

Meanwhile, Germany's nitrogen serves the French government as a justification for fresh occupations and fresh armaments. The anti-Russian propaganda secures the non-recognition of the Russian Government until such time as it accepts that economic and financial control which Barthou in his simplicity demanded at the Genoa Conference. Secret political treaties and secret military agreements have been concluded, all with the same object, viz., to paralyse every effort by Great Britain in the cause of peace, to isolate and depress

Italy, and to make possible the political and military primacy of France by dividing Germany into five or six states, some of them in the hands of the "Reds," and others in the hands of reactionaries, and by obtaining the control of the coal and iron of the Continent.

The occupation of the Ruhr, which is for France a much graver event than any of Germany's past crimes, is the logical and inevitable consequence of the ideas and intentions which animated the real inspirers and the real authors of the Treaty of Versailles.

CHAPTER III

THE FALL OF GERMANY'S ECONOMY

The Programme and the Policy for Dismembering Germany

If the public had been able to take part in the meetings of the Prime Ministers and responsible men who prepared the peace-treaties and provided for their application, it would have received a very bad impression, and would perhaps have lost all faith in the seriousness of those solemn acts which must, or ought, to govern the life of nations. What a network of intrigues! And, often, what lack of principle in the decisions, and what compromises at the eleventh hour in order to put an end to an unforeseen obstacle! The Prime Ministers were faced almost always with the necessity of returning quickly to their own countries, whither the cares and responsibilities of government recalled them. Day by day they were forced to discuss the varied problems of distant countries, of which not only did they not know the conditions of existence, but often the situation. The most varied problems were sometimes presented unexpectedly, without any previous preparation. Decisions were made in the afternoon on subjects of which typed notes had been given in the morning. There was a whole crowd of military, diplomatic and financial experts around the Prime Ministers. They included some men of worth, but each of them saw things only from his own point of view, and often that point of view was incorrect or untrustworthy. Around the experts there was a large number of bankers and manufacturers (especially war-

manufacturers), unscrupulous people, and international finance-sharks, whose chief object was to consolidate their business and found new ones. Then in the saloons of the hotels and at the receptions, there were a large number of women, some of doubtful fame, almost always with a title of nobility, whether genuine or spurious, many Russian women, many Polish women, spies and agents. When the austerity of the leading representatives kept them at a distance, they went to the experts, the attachés and the secretaries. They finished by knowing everything. Often the press was informed of decisions before they had been made. An atmosphere was formed. I remember taking part in February, 1920, during the Conference of London, in a meeting summoned because certain newspapers in opposition to the British Government—it does not matter of what party—had published very delicate news on a sitting of the previous day, which all had pledged their word of honour to keep a profound secret.

Thus the Treaty of Versailles was drawn up amid troubled surroundings of suspicion, hatred, and plunder. It apparently consists of 440 Articles, and is the most prolix treaty that has even been drawn up. But this is only in appearance. A series of appendices, divided into chapters, forms part of the treaty. These appendices, which were seldom read, which were not sufficiently examined, and which were generally drawn up in the offices of the Quai d'Orsay, have made every kind of violence possible. They contain many detailed arrangements, often in connection with those parts of the treaty which have nothing to do with politics, and in those arrangements there is often an equivocal meaning which permits everything, or which is said to permit everything, and which authorises absurdities. No one has taken the trouble to examine them, and yet all the acts of violence which have followed each other for the

past three years find an imaginary justification in some appendix approved of without being read, or only casually examined.

This is what happened in the case of Upper Silesia, which was divided contrary to the explicit directions of the treaty, by making use of a clause in the appendix referring to methods of voting; this is also what happened in the case of the invasion of the Ruhr. Attempts have been made to justify it (*i.e.* to justify a very grave violation of international law and a very grave act of international plunder), by making use of a condition which had escaped the notice of everyone, and which was found in an appendix to the economic clauses, not to the clauses dealing with military matters and penalties.

Lloyd George and the American representatives can declare in good faith (and I even think it is their duty to do so) whether they ever foresaw that an appendix which they had never thoroughly examined, like that which concerns the application of economic measures, could justify a military action so grievous to the integrity of a nation and so dangerous to the peace of the world.

I have studied the Treaty of Versailles in detail; I have examined it in every clause, and I am convinced that not only was it conceived in a spirit of hatred and without any thought of peace; that not only was it a vast encyclopædia of acts of plunder of every kind, but also that clever men introduced into it, without the knowledge of the most responsible parties, clauses which were to serve as pretexts for every kind of future violence.

Almost all of the arrangements of the Treaty of Versailles, including those which were passed without discussion, as forming part of appendices, and which escaped notice and are now the cause of every kind of violence, formed part of a programme and of a plan which had long been premeditated—the French plan of dismembering Germany, of ruining her, and of obtaining

thereby the control of Europe's coal and iron, and thence the political and military primacy of Europe. The policy of reparations, and thence the occupation of the Ruhr and the paralysis of German life, were to be the *means* to attain the imperialist *end*.

I will now try to indicate briefly the progressive stages of this policy of disruption, which has been followed ever since 1919.

1. *The Treaty as a means of oppression: Uncertainty as a means of strife.*—Almost all those who signed the Treaty of Versailles in June, 1919, did not notice that they were striking to the heart, not Germany alone, but the whole of the life of Europe. I myself have had occasion to speak with many heads of governments and heads of countries, and have discovered that they did not know to what they had agreed. The greater part of those who signed, especially the representatives of the minor states, did not know what they had signed. Many knew that the treaty was against Germany, but hardly anyone realised that it was against Europe. The treaty was almost entirely drawn up at Paris, and under the influence of men interested in the iron trade. Some of these men were also members of the French Government, and would have consigned Europe to flames in order to get the Continental control of that which in their eyes was the fundamental industry of war and peace. Perhaps the war would have finished much earlier, if efforts had been concentrated on Italy, and if Austria-Hungary had first been beaten, and Bulgaria and Turkey isolated. Austria-Hungary was the *locus minoris resistentiæ*. After 1915, however, when the first danger had been passed, there was a fixed plan—to win the war, even though at the cost of greater sacrifice, on the French front; to assert the military supremacy of France; to make the peace-treaty at Paris on purely French lines, and not on political and military lines only; to prolong the war into

the peace, and to aim at the dismemberment of Germany and the control of the whole of Europe's life. Many of the most eminent military leaders were of the opinion that the attack should be chiefly directed from Italy against Austria-Hungary. This, however, was always prevented, and when I spoke of it, I encountered not only the most obstinate resistance, but also an unexpected aversion; and I noticed at once a deceitful press campaign. When times are quieter, when one has time to think of history and not merely of the agitated events of daily life, I will illustrate this interesting period of the war with documents, and will relate the opposition which I encountered and the agitation which was stirred up in Italy, certainly not by the Italian Government. The armistice pact, in which, as I have already shown in *Peaceless Europe*, the disruptive formula referring to reparations was introduced by Clemenceau by stealth, and accepted by the Allies and Associates merely to satisfy him, was the negation of all the principles proclaimed during the war. The peace-treaty not only carried the mistakes of the armistice still farther, but also distinctly denied all the solemn pledges which had been given. Wilson, after giving way to the most immoral demands without taking any count of the consequences, deceived himself by thinking that he was at least taking back to America an element of peace by having established the League of Nations. His principal colleagues, however, beginning with Lansing, the Secretary of State, were already aware that the League of Nations, as it was then constituted, was nothing more than a Holy Alliance of the victors and an immoral means to justify every kind of wrong.

As a consequence of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany lost all her transferable wealth and all her best territories. Later interpretations of the treaty, almost all carried out in bad faith, increased her losses. In addition to all weapons of war and of defence and to a great part

of her best railway materials, Germany had to surrender almost the whole of her merchant fleet, all her colonies, her foreign credits, etc., and to accept indemnities of unfixed but enormous size, under the name of reparations for damage done—damage which was to a great extent invented or exaggerated by ardent bureaucratic imaginations in the service of industrial interests. By the treaty, or as a consequence of it, Germany lost Alsace-Lorraine, with its deposits of coal, iron and potash, and with the vast industries created by the Germans since 1870, *i.e.* about 5800 square miles and 1,870,000 inhabitants. She lost also the very wealthy provinces of East and West Prussia—Posen and Pomerania—which were the centre of her agricultural prosperity, *i.e.* nearly 20,000 square miles with 3,410,000 inhabitants; also eastern Upper Silesia with its great coal and zinc mines and its vast metal-trade, which was closely connected with almost every German industry, *i.e.* about 1200 square miles and 890,000 inhabitants. Further, she lost territories on the Rhine, together with Schleswig and Silesia, covering an area of 2300 square miles with a population of 300,000. Altogether, Germany lost about 29,000 square miles, *i.e.* an eighth part of her total area, and 6,470,000 inhabitants, *i.e.* almost a tenth of her population. She lost therefore, a territory more than twice as large as Belgium, and wealth at least equal to that of Belgium and Holland together.

The disorder already caused by depriving her of her most prosperous agricultural and manufacturing industries, and of those parts of her territory which were richest in raw materials, was bound to be aggravated to a tremendous degree by leaving the Saar, an entirely German district, in the most absolute uncertainty for fifteen years; by dividing East Prussia into two parts, so that Germany is the only country in the world which does not possess territorial unity, and which has a foreign

population of Poles on its territory; and by leaving the questions of indemnities, boundaries, and industrial life almost entirely unsettled. Together with her best coal-producing areas, Germany lost about four-fifths of her iron-fields, and was forced to send enormous quantities of coal in payment of reparations, at a time when she herself was compelled to import coal at any cost to keep her industries going. Germany's merchant fleet increased between 1896 and 1914 from 1,916,000 gross tonnage to 5,712,000; it was the second in the world. She was left with a gross tonnage of only 604,080, *i.e.* about a tenth, and this was composed only of small vessels of little value from the point of view of international trade. This was done merely to impoverish her, for the ships taken from the Germans lay idly in the harbours of the victors for lack of commerce. German colonies were six times as large as the home-country. They were partitioned among a certain number of the conquerors, without any other consideration than those of plunder and dominion. Prussia, when she was victorious in 1814 and 1870, did not do such things.

Territorial concessions made at random upset the whole of German life. On account of her great population, she was necessarily a country living by industry and trade; yet her raw materials were taken from her in a proportion varying from a quarter to more than three quarters, and her home industries were thrown into violent disorder without any advantage even to the conquerors.

The territories ceded by Germany in accordance with the treaty, or arbitrarily torn from her in violation of the treaty, represented the greatest sources of her food supply. This applies particularly to the eastern provinces, which not only supplied their own needs, but also those of a considerable part of the whole nation. Thus Germany lost 1170 square miles of wheat, 5330 of rye, 1120 of barley, 1980 of oats, and 2350 of potatoes. She

lost about ten per cent. of her population, but a much larger percentage of her agricultural productions.

German agriculture often reached a high level of production, even with unfavourable soil, merely on account of the technical ability of the farmers, together with the rearing of cattle and the wide use of chemical manures. Germany's losses in the war necessarily diminished her labour-power very much. No country in Europe except Russia had more men killed than Germany, who lost more than France and Britain together. Her great losses of potash, together with the cession of certain territories; the diminution of the supply of nitrogen which was required for agriculture; the difficulty which the fall of her exchanges caused in the purchase from abroad of the fertilizers of which she had made such great use in the past (*e.g.* sulphuric acid, Peruvian guano, and phosphates)—all these facts, together with the forced cession of large quantities of cattle, brought about not merely a decline in farming, but also a much smaller return, at a time when the need was greatest. It is calculated that Germany's agricultural productiveness has fallen enormously. The production of wheat per acre in 1922 was nearly 40 per cent. less than in 1913, rye showed a decline of 30 per cent., barley of 40 per cent., oats of over 40 per cent., potatoes of 5 per cent., and beet-root of 15 per cent. The situation in 1923 was much worse.

Germany's mineral losses were a real catastrophe for her industries.

The aim of the victors, or of some of them, was to demand at random enormous quantities of raw materials and the territories pertaining to them. There was a desire to overturn the whole of Germany's territory and to abolish all security under the pretext of obtaining reparations, so as to stifle German industry and force it to capitulate.

From the very first some French politicians, and many others later, including Poincaré, Loucheur, Tardieu, Dariac, and others, demanded shares in all German firms as part of the reparations. Tardieu demanded 25 per cent. of the capital, and Poincaré, the ever-conciliating and discreet Poincaré, demanded 60 per cent. It was a question not merely of associations between industrial groups in the two countries, but of undoubted control. The plan was clear from the very first—to seize the largest possible amount of territory rich in raw materials, under any pretext whatever, with the treaty or without the treaty, with a referendum or against a referendum; to diffuse widely a sense of insecurity; to drive the exchanges down, and thereby to prevent the purchase of raw materials and to disorder the internal conditions of Germany. By suffocating Germany's economic life it was felt that there would undoubtedly follow a Germany divided into five or six states, which was the aim of every movement, and that, by possessing, under the name of reparations, a majority, or a considerable part, of the working capital of the whole of Germany, it would be possible to exercise in every country a control which would be rendered all the easier by the labours of the Reparations Commission and by military occupations of continuous and undefined duration.

The coal policy was already transforming the whole of Germany's economic life. Before the war she had become an exporting country; she now found herself unexpectedly transformed into an importing country.

The same policy of appropriation was carried out with all the other raw materials. Germany's loss in minerals deprived her of an amount of iron equal to 20 per cent. of the total production of Europe, to 34 per cent. in the case of zinc, and to 8 per cent. in the case of lead. It will suffice to say that, as a result of her territorial losses, her production of iron, which had been 26,608,000 tons,

was reduced by 21,299,000 tons; her production of zinc, which had been 646,000 tons, was reduced by 441,000 tons; and her production of lead, which had been 145,000 tons, was reduced by 38,000 tons. Her proportional losses were therefore 74·5, 68·2 and 26·2 per cent. respectively. Iron was Germany's chief product, and iron goods constituted more than a fifth part of her pre-war exports. Although there has been a slight improvement since the first collapse in 1921 and 1922, the situation is still very grave.

In order to secure the collapse of German industries, however, to depress Germany and to dismember her, it was necessary to bring about, in addition to her losses, a state of uncertainty in all her industries. Nothing depresses industry so much, even in the strongest and best organised countries, as a state of insecurity and instability. Unexpected increases in tariffs, unexpected losses of markets are often sufficient to overturn flourishing industries. Germany lost all security at a blow. Everything became uncertain. The national boundaries were uncertain, economic conditions uncertain, the supply of raw materials uncertain, the extent of foreign control uncertain, the sums required by the invaders were uncertain, the exactions of the army of occupation were uncertain, and the internal security of the factories was uncertain, as it was no longer possible to keep any of their operations secret. Life itself was uncertain, and the goods of the inhabitants of the occupied territories, or of territories threatened with occupation, were also uncertain. The strongest British and American industries would not have held out for long against such torments. If everything in Germany has not yet tumbled into ruins, it is due to the marvellous spirit of resignation and of endurance of the Germans.

The thesis which the French Government, and particularly Poincaré, supported, was in fact that it was

not necessary to define anything. Constant care was taken not to settle definitely any important matter.

The Treaty of Versailles had allotted some territories haphazard. Others were to be allotted later after taking a referendum; in some cases at once, in other cases later, as in that of the Saar. Permanent causes of agitation were thus established on German soil, and causes of corruption, or, as it is euphemistically called, of *propaganda*. If German industries are developed or saved from ruin, no one knows to-day to whom they will be allotted to-morrow.

The Treaty of Versailles laid down a military occupation of a maximum duration of fifteen years, divided into three zones which were to be evacuated every five years. Poincaré upheld the theory of an indefinite occupation. The longer it lasts, he said, the more the people will get accustomed to it. The French Government afterwards supported another thesis—that the occupation does not count as having commenced until the treaty has been executed. Now the treaty, which everyone knows cannot be executed, has not been executed in its entirety, and will never be executed. The occupation, therefore, is to be considered as not having begun. To-day, therefore, the opening date of the occupation has not been reached, and never will be reached.

The Treaty of Versailles has fixed the area which was to be occupied. No other territory could fairly be occupied by Entente troops. France, in order to obtain the occupation of cities on the right bank of the Rhine, and afterwards of the Ruhr, which is the heart of Germany's economy and the special object of French desires, has maintained that, in accordance with an arrangement in the treaty, which has nothing to do with military measures or occupations but is solely an economic precaution which no honest man could interpret as a military reprisal, any Entente state can act against Germany by

herself, and even without the agreement of the others, and can occupy such new territories as she thinks fit as an economic guarantee. Thus the best of Germany's territories have been invaded and their inhabitants have been considered as under martial law, subjected to every kind of spoliation and violence, and compelled to be judged by foreign military tribunals. Some of the greatest industrial leaders of the world have been prosecuted and condemned on German soil, and in districts not regarded in any treaty as occupied areas.

2. *Disarmament and Military Commissions as a means of intimidation and propaganda.*—When industry had been deprived of all conditions conducive to development and security, the programme of suffocation found its most powerful ally in military commissions, both at the time of disarmament and afterwards. Everybody knows what these military commissions have been, with their expenditure, their luxury, their cynicism. To a great extent their sole function has been to intimidate the people, but many of them have also aimed at the disorganisation of economic life.

The German navy was either destroyed or handed over to the victors, with the exception of eight ships of the line, eight small cruisers, and five small auxiliaries—a fleet of no importance, perhaps suited only to the work of policing the coasts.

When the German army retired after the armistice, it left behind in the occupied territories a vast quantity of war material. After the treaty and up to December, 1922, Germany handed over the whole of her munitions of war—5,909,149 rifles and 105,163 machine-guns, 28,001 gun-carriages, 38,800,000 shells and mines, 16,600,000 hand-bombs, 60,400,000 detonators, 472,200,000 rifle-cartridges, 335,000 tons of unfilled shells, mines, hand-bombs, etc., 23,500 tons of projectile and cartridge-cases, 37,600 tons of powder, 79,100 moulds, 14,014 aeroplanes, 27,749

aeroplane-engines, and 3760 field-telephones. The whole of this material, perhaps the largest that was ever accumulated, was handed over to the Entente and partly destroyed. Germany has handed over anything that could be used as a weapon of war with the exception of a few thousand projectiles, the destruction of which presented some difficulty and considerable danger.

Of this immense amount of material, valued at almost six milliard and a half gold marks (6,380,000,000 according to official calculations) only 200,000 millions were placed to Germany's credit on the reparations bill.

France, after the peace treaty, asked Great Britain and Italy, as I have already related, to delay the nomination of ambassadors and diplomatic representatives; she preferred to speak to the vanquished through the medium of military commissions. It was only after I had made strong representations in the name of Italy, and that Lloyd George and Lord Curzon had done the same in the name of Britain, that, with considerable delay, diplomatic relationships were re-established. The military commissions practised a certain amount of despotism unchecked. To whom, or in what way, could there be any complaint against them?

The destruction of war-material was almost always made the excuse for entering into factories, for disorganising them, and for learning the most secret and most delicate details of manufacture.

The Treaty of Versailles contained certain clauses which, under the appearance of pleasing Belgium and making the reconstruction of the devastated areas more rapid, placed the whole of German industry in dependence on the competing industries of the victorious countries, and practically of France alone. As a result of these clauses, as much as one-third of the machinery and material of any German factory could be requisitioned. To demand one-third of the material, or merely to have

the right to do so, meant putting industry not only in the greatest uncertainty, but exposing it to the greed of foreign rivals. Requisitions were carried out arbitrarily by military commissions, by disguised agents of plundering manufacturers, and by those international sharks of the great industry of war, who have existed and still exist in every country, with their falsely patriotic and cynically nationalist press—the people really and chiefly responsible for the greatest catastrophes of humanity.

While there was a shortage of raw materials in the factories; while there was a shortage of credits, of foreign markets, of means of transport; while people often had to work surrounded by foreign troops who displayed their pomp and their insolence, there was no security either of customs, of patents, or of secret processes, or even security of retaining one's own plant. Things which were not required were often demanded under the name of reparations, merely to prevent the German factories from exporting freely.

By the stipulations of Article 169 of the Treaty of Versailles, all machinery and special tools for military use were to be destroyed. They have either been destroyed or carried to the victorious countries. The military commissions, by ignorance, by design, or acting on orders received, have even claimed the destruction of anything which might be used even for peaceful purposes, including useful machinery which afterwards had to be replaced. Not only were machines for the manufacture of weapons of war destroyed, but also water-carts, electric-transformers, Thomas furnaces, and even fire-extinguishers, lightning-conductors, railway plant and metals, etc. Thus the war industries were prevented from transforming themselves into peace industries, unemployment was increased, and a crisis was artificially provoked.

It is impossible to estimate even approximately the

damage inflicted on German industry under the pretext of destroying factories for the production of munitions. Goods worth many milliards were completely destroyed without any reason beyond that of injuring the vanquished. An accurate calculation shows that out of 337 factories placed under close control (*i.e.* out of a minority of the factories devastated or robbed), the value of the material made unserviceable, and the cost of its destruction, amounted to more than 2700 million gold marks. The plant belonging to the State, and even depôts and huts, was destroyed without taking into account the uses to which it could have been put for industrial purposes. In addition to the ignorance of the military commissions, there was the cunning work of competitors who appropriated, by means of their agents, whatever was useful to them, and had the rest destroyed.

All this produced as its effect the disorganisation of German industry. It remained only to disorganise her circulation and to arouse internal divisions and suspicion between the various parts of the empire in order to make all reconstruction and useful work impossible. It was very easy to do this by means of military occupations, invasions of new areas, and the isolation of new zones which the treaties had not contemplated.

3. *The armies of occupation and the humiliation of the vanquished.*—As a result of the treaty, Germany's boundaries are to be uncertain for some years, and the sovereignty of the German state is to be uncertain, since it cannot have an army, a customs-system, or even the power to make laws and regulations without the possibility of their being modified by the Reparations Commission. The life of her industries is uncertain, since a requirement of the Reparations Commission, an occupation, or a military requisition, could, and still can, inflict great harm. Her economic life was uncertain on account of the inevitable fall of the mark. The life of the State

was uncertain, since France, in violation of the treaty, had brought forward the theory that any of the victorious states could carry out a military occupation of large tracts of territory under the pretext of economic penalties. It was necessary to convulse the minds of the inhabitants, to take away all security of life, and all respect for their persons. A long occupation of almost indefinite length was the thesis on which all found themselves in agreement—Poincaré, Hanotaux, Foch, Dariac, Barthou, etc. Yet the occupation allowed by the Treaty of Versailles is limited in duration and extent. A method has therefore been found not to apply the treaty. Poincaré was the first to maintain, and others have since supported him, that the maximum of fifteen years must be respected, but that it commences only when the treaty has been completely executed. It does not matter if it has not been executed because it cannot be executed, or because it was willed that it should be impossible to execute it. By the very fact that it has not been executed, even if it be only on a small point, the *dies a quo*, as the jurists say, has not yet begun. The treaty also places a limit to the extent of the occupation; but on this point also the breath of fancy has played. The theory of reprisals and pledges has been brought forward, and repeated by Poincaré in hundreds of speeches. Since there is a clause which authorises economic reprisals without Germany being able to consider them as an act of hostility, the Allies acting together, or any one of them acting separately, can, it is maintained, exact reprisals, invade territories, suppress individual liberties, and treat the citizens worse than if they were on hostile soil in time of war. If the Germans do not pay, their territory is taken as a pledge, so that men are therefore regarded as pawns, even in time of peace.

When France was beaten in 1815 and 1870, the Germans exacted no reprisals. And yet, as I have already pointed

out, they emerged in 1815 from the brutal violence of Napoleon, who had convulsed and humiliated all the people of Germany, and had set on their thrones adventurers and sons of adventurers of his own family, which was certainly not of the purest legitimist stock.

Prussia in 1815 had legitimate reasons for hatred and vengeance. England was exhausted and inflamed by a long and perilous war, which had threatened not merely her prosperity but her very existence. Russia had cause to avenge herself for the brutal and unjust aggression of which she had been the object. The Treaty of Vienna of 1815 was a treaty of great nobility. France was respected; her army was not curtailed (although she had attacked everyone), and she preserved all her wealth, her colonies, and her fleet. In particular, she suffered no humiliations, which, in the life of nations, are worse than misery. The indemnity was concerned only with the expenses of the occupation by Russia, England, Prussia, and all their allies, and amounted to 700 millions. The German military occupation was to last five years; but, by agreements subsequently arrived at, it lasted only two years, and all the armies of occupation evacuated France at the end of 1817. In 1870 the Germans imposed an indemnity of five milliards and a brief occupation; but the expenses of the occupation amounted only to 3·407 milliard francs, *i.e.* to 2·76 milliard gold marks.

Now, the French occupation, as conceived by Poincaré and his principal colleagues, was to be of undefined character and was to have as its object the depression and deep humiliation of the Germans and the sapping of their moral resistance. The programme of Hanotaux and of Delcassé (Germany divided into five or six states), the programme of Foch (the Rhine as a boundary), the programme of Loucheur and of the iron and steel interests (French control of German industries, and French mastery of coal and iron and therefore of European armaments)

found their most formidable basis in a large army of occupation and in an occupation of indefinite length.

There was in this, and there still is, a fundamental illusion. Germany, even though reduced to her present unjust limits, has twenty million men more than France. "That is too much," said one of the most prominent political leaders of France to me one day. Another politician of high standing added: "There are twenty million more than are necessary." But who can say how many are necessary? And around these twenty million there are another thirty million Germans, and, in addition to these, there is a large number of Germans outside Europe.

Clemenceau has always stated, both during and since the war, that the Germans are different from other people. It is necessary to deal with them in the *manière forte*. They must be terrified and intimidated when the opportunity presents itself, because that is the only way of dealing with them. When Lloyd George and I, who did not wish to adopt such measures against the Germans, remarked to Clemenceau that no nation would stand such a thing, he merely replied that the Germans were different from other people. When we expressed our regret at a measure which was a violation of their liberties, Clemenceau contented himself with remarking: "But when did the Germans ever have any liberty?"

To terrify the Germans, to terrorise them, to profit by their humiliated state of mind and by their misfortunes, to aid in every possible way every kind of dissolution and every attempt at separatism—to obtain this result three things were necessary. The first was to give to the occupation an indefinite character; the second was to make it as rough and brutal as possible; the third was to give the conviction that every separatist movement would be supported directly or indirectly, while every nationalist movement would be promptly suppressed.

The first objective was reached in two ways, by inter-

preting the treaty to mean that the period of occupation had not yet even commenced, and that new territory could be (and in fact was) occupied as an economic measure; and by accommodating themselves and spending money in such a way as to make the Germans think that the French intended to remain there for a long time, and in some cases, as on the left bank of the Rhine, that they had come to stay.

In my previous books I revealed the financial dissipation and folly of the army of occupation on the Rhine. In the four years from the 11th November, 1918, to the end of 1922, it cost in round figures 4,500 million gold marks, in addition to the 94 million gold marks expended by the Inter-Allied Commissions. This means that the cost has exceeded by 700 million gold marks the whole of the military expenditure of the German Empire during the period of its greatest militarism, from 1910 to 1913. This simple fact would be sufficient to condemn the peace and would be the strongest possible accusation against the new militarism if it were not that the majority of European statesmen no longer listen to reason, and if the Continental Press were not, in the majority of cases, tied to banks which speculate on what is taking place, and to war-profiteers who, having made great gains, still hope to speculate on future wars.

The occupied zones and the invaded area include all the left bank of the Rhine and the districts which are most important in the production of coal and iron on the left bank; and not only territories belonging to Prussia, but also to Bavaria, Baden, Hesse, and Oldenburg. The Treaty of Versailles permitted the occupation only of a territory of about 13,000 square miles, with a population of seven millions. The Saar, a completely German territory, with 200,000 inhabitants, administered by the League of Nations, was not to have any French troops; on the contrary, it is really administered by the

French, and has French troops. By the application of the penalties permitted by the Conference of London on account of Germany's failure to pay, additional territory of 200 square miles and with 900,000 inhabitants was occupied on the right bank of the Rhine, including many of Germany's most important cities. Finally, on 11th January, 1923, France, accompanied by Belgium alone, occupied the Ruhr, *i.e.* the heart of Germany's economy, a territory covering 2500 square miles, with about five million inhabitants. The French have subsequently occupied further territories on the right bank of the Rhine, whose course, from Kehl to Emmerich, is entirely in the hands of the French. About fifteen million Germans are as it were foreigners in their native land. Respectable citizens are expelled solely because they are faithful to Germany, or are tried by foreign judges, and possess neither security of property nor security of person. In these territories, which are subjected to every kind of privation, and in which children often die of starvation, humiliation is more grievous than famine. Many of my friends, Americans, Englishmen, and Scandinavians, have sent me photographs which recall the worst ages of barbarism. Free men have been scourged, tormented and outraged. No one possesses security of life, property, or honour.

The object was to provoke the ruin of Germany's finances, to overturn her economy, and to destroy all moral resistance by means of military occupations. Dissipation and cruelty have become two methods of equal efficacy.

I have already published many facts relative to the immoral dissipations of the armies of occupation, but these increase from day to day, directly or indirectly. As is well known, the officers of the armies of occupation receive, in addition to lodgings, and to pay fixed in their own country at the expense of the Germans, monthly salaries which are often nothing less than exactions.

A general in command receives, in one way or another, more than the President of the German Republic, the Chancellor, the twelve Ministers of the Reich, and the eight Ministers of the Prussian State receive between them as pay and allowances. A private soldier, in addition to the pay which he would receive at home, and to his lodgings, receives sums for overseas pay and allowances which exceed those of a general or a Minister of the Reich. Men who are renowned for their discoveries, for their learning, or for the light which they have thrown upon human thought, are paid less than a negro or a negroid brought by France from a village of African savages to defend the rights of civilisation on the Rhine. Some private soldiers are paid little less than double the amount received by the Chancellor of Germany.

Poverty and the housing crisis have compelled men of letters, scientists, and men of world-wide renown to live in tiny houses, to do without all personal comforts, and without domestic servants. All the best houses have been requisitioned for the armies of occupation. The officers have expended money on all kinds of luxuries at the expense of the vanquished, and have even made them pay for celebrations of victories. In twenty months, from the autumn of 1920 to the summer of 1922, Germany, among other mad expenditure, has had to provide the armies of occupation with 1400 drawing-rooms, 2600 studies (seldom used for study), 5000 dining-rooms (generally used much more than the studies), 10,300 bedrooms, 4600 kitchens, 180 suites of furniture in leather, 2900 leather arm-chairs, 1800 suites of wicker furniture, 6700 wicker arm-chairs, 2100 suites of upholstered furniture, 1400 upholstered arm-chairs, 2300 full-sized bedsteads, 3500 children's cots, 3900 wardrobes, 3400 wash-bowls, 3000 lounge-chairs, a large amount of furniture for ladies, including 800 writing-desks, 500 dressing-tables, 18,000 carpets, 50,900 covers,

175,000 serviettes, 69,000 dinner-services, 89,000 coffee-services, 4300 tea-services, 4000 tea-cups, 25,000 china plates, 72,000 glasses for white wine, 51,000 Burgundy-glasses, 15,000 dessert wine-glasses, 45,000 champagne-glasses, 50,000 liqueur-glasses, 26,000 beer-glasses, 9000 decanters, an enormous quantity of cloth, and more than three million metres of table- and bed-linen, at a time when there was a shortage of linen in all the hospitals of Germany. Never in the history of modern countries has similar plunder taken place under the shelter of a treaty of shame.

I have related several times the brutal acts committed against the people, the numerous crimes which have been left unpunished, the acts of violence, and the licentious deeds which have taken place almost in broad daylight and of which no attempt has been made to discover the authors. Many people have not known how to explain why France, which possessed, and which, in spite of her financial condition, still possesses the largest army in the world, preferred for a long time to send coloured troops to the Rhine, among whom there were even representatives of races which only yesterday were cannibals. Poincaré, who often makes use of a somewhat macabre kind of humour, introduced a personal note even on this matter. When questioned by a coloured deputy representing the Antilles Islands, who expressed indignation because the Germans were not glad to have coloured troops on their soil in time of peace, he replied that France, in pursuance of the great ideal of the equality of peoples, was well aware of the uncivilised ideas of Germany. A prominent member of the American Parliament wrote to me on that occasion that if Poincaré was not labouring for peace, he was at least labouring in the cause of humorous literature. That gave me the idea of writing an article for the *Manchester Guardian* on the humour of Poincaré, which is a most interesting feature of this sad phase of Europe's decline.

The second objective, that of making the occupation rough and brutal, was fully achieved, and facilitated the third, that of stirring up separatist movements of every kind. If Germany could have peace, and could live by abandoning her unity; if Bavaria, the Rhineland, Saxony, and Baden, could return to normal conditions of life by breaking away from Prussia, the sacrifice of unity began to envisage itself as a necessity to men of unfixed opinions, to those who were easily corrupted, and to those who were attracted by flattery or money. Even if the great mass of the German people preferred every kind of torment rather than abandon the unity of their country, all had not the same spirit of sacrifice or the same lofty sentiments. One of the objects of the policy of occupation was to create a division of opinion, and it succeeded. The humiliation of the whole nation was achieved when licentious acts went unpunished, and a semi-savage soldier, because he was in the service of France, was paid nine or ten times as much as the greatest of German scientists, who have contributed so much to the development of knowledge and to the greatest achievements of the human mind.

4. *The disorder of Eastern Germany as a means of breaking up the German Empire.*—As a result of the Treaty of Versailles, Eastern Germany had been internally convulsed. In order to separate Russia and Germany permanently, there was a necessity for the creation not of the ethnical Poland laid down by Wilson, and which everyone desired (perhaps France and Russia alone in 1917 did not desire it with their secret agreements), but of a great Poland which should include large slices of Russian and German territory. The idea of a corridor to link Poland with the sea lent itself to the division of East Prussia from West Prussia, and thus to the creation of the state of Danzig, which is the most ridiculous creation of human tyranny. The citizens of East Prussia,

if they wish to go from Danzig, the city of Schopenhauer, to Königsberg, the city of Kant, *i.e.* to make a journey between the homes of two of the greatest of modern thinkers, must cross Polish territory. If we consider carefully the articles of the Treaty of Versailles from 87 to 108, we see that their most important object was not merely to create a great Poland, a military Poland, which should prevent Germany and Russia from uniting, and which should permit the Germans, deprived of their wealth throughout the world, to use in Russia their large number of workmen and of organisers, but also to overturn the whole of Eastern Germany. I have considered those articles closely; I have read all the most important correspondence relating to them; I have examined the events which have taken place since 1919; and I have been convinced that the programme of disruption, which forms part of the coal and iron policy, and enters into vast plans of imperialist policy, has guided all the military and diplomatic policy, and is still guiding it.

In the *Decadence of Europe* I examined at length the episode, so shameful for civilisation, of the partition of Upper Silesia in violation of the treaty and of the referendum—an act which, like the invasion of the Ruhr, constitutes a terrible instance of double-dealing, and is more shameful than Germany's violation of Belgium in 1914. I have been able to examine a great part of the more private documents and correspondence referring to this episode, which is one of the most iniquitous of our times. It was a detestable act of tyranny to take Danzig from Germany when its territory does not contain more than one per cent. of Poles, or the city itself more than four per cent.

The arbitrary nature of the dismemberment of Upper Silesia constitutes a crime which history will record as one of the most shameful pages of political piracy, in the service of an unscrupulous and dishonourable plutoc-

racy. During the peace negotiations France had tried to secure the allotment of Upper Silesia to Poland without more ado. Wilson, during the latter part of his activities in Europe, held out against nothing; he was pursuing the phantom of a League of Nations while the nations were falling to pieces. The French demand was such an enormity that, by way of a compromise, it was decided to refer the whole question to a referendum. I have related how that referendum was carried out; how the whole of the French organisation was placed at Poland's service; how corruption was employed on a large scale to prevent the free expression of opinion; and how violent measures were adopted to prevent the Germans from voting. Nevertheless the referendum of 20th March, 1921, did not give a unanimous result, but a result of even greater value in view of the violence and the crimes which had been committed. Out of 1,220,998 electors, of whom 1,190,846 voted, 707,605 declared for union with Germany, and 479,359 for union with Poland; that is to say 59·6 per cent. for Germany and 40·4 per cent. for Poland. There ought not to have been any doubt; but recourse was had to one of the appendices to the treaty, one of those infamous traps—an appendix which perhaps no one had read, and which no one could ever think it possible to use in the service of detestable acts of international bad faith. It was decided to dismember Upper Silesia, by allotting to Poland forthwith the communes in which Poles were in a majority, and afterwards even others where they were in a minority. Great Britain resisted to the last. I had left the Italian Government on account of opposition which was not wholly Italian in character, and which was directed against me even from countries which had been our allies in the war. I, who am a democrat, was described as a friend of revolution. I, who had been a fierce opponent of the Germans, was described as a post-war defeatist because I did not

sufficiently value the victory, *i.e.* because I did not lend myself to the acts of international piracy which were certainly not to Italy's advantage or conducive to her greatness. The Italian Government, owing to the work of Giolitti, followed France in her demands, which were those of the French iron and steel trade.

Afterwards there came the cynical deliberation of the League of Nations, which, from that time forward, deprived that body of all prestige and made it to be considered a nest of intrigues of the victorious countries, in spite of the statements of Lord Robert Cecil and other honest defenders of a body which has lost all prestige, which everyone despises, and which will come to a miserable end unless it finds a means of changing its character to its very foundations.

One result of the partition of Upper Silesia was to disorganise all Germany's iron, timber, coal, and zinc industries. The economic unity of the country was based to a large extent on two centres—the Ruhr and Upper Silesia. When one of these was shattered, it was logically necessary to shatter the other. The partition of Upper Silesia, however, was intended to have not only an economic effect, but also a moral effect of humiliation, and to persuade the more timid Germans of the uselessness of resistance of any kind. What was the use of resisting if the treaty was violated, and if even the results of a referendum no longer possessed any value?

France claims the Saar, in which there are no Frenchmen. A referendum is to be held fifteen years after the treaty; but, according to Poincaré and Barthou, the fifteen years have not yet even commenced. When, in spite of all resistance, the Germans of the Saar assert their firm desire to belong to Germany, will their wishes be respected? Will there not still be other governments like that of Giolitti willing to recognise any claim whatsoever of France, in which even arithmetic is abolished?

And will there not still be a League of Nations ready to justify even the most immoral violations?

Thus the action of the armies of occupation was completed by the undoing and destruction of every well-intentioned work. The Germans are driven either towards militarism or towards revolution, two things which perhaps will ruin the whole of Europe, but which will certainly engulf Germany for a long time.

5. *The Saar as an example of the manière forte.*—Hanotaux, at the time of the armistice, recommended the *manière forte* because it also, when placed at the service of the French, constitutes *propagande de liberté.* The most typical example of its use is to be found in the Saar.

The Saar, as the French themselves recognise, is entirely German. It did not contain, as we have said, a hundred Frenchmen among more than 700,000 Germans. It is difficult to find any country of greater ethnical compactness; it is entirely German by race, history, sentiment, and tradition. This did not prevent the fact that, while the nations of the Entente thought they were fighting for the liberty of France and for securing the restitution to her, in case of victory, of the territories lost in 1870, France was making secret agreements at Petrograd from 1916 onwards to ask for Russia's support in obtaining the whole coal-field of the Saar. The real aims of her diplomacy were revealed from that time onwards.

During the Conference of Paris the French Government unexpectedly demanded the annexation of the Saar to France. There was a scene of stupor. America was on the point of withdrawing from the Conference, and Great Britain showed her profound displeasure. Italy, as we have already mentioned, and as Tardieu, Baker, Lansing, Deschanel, and all those who took part in the Conference of Paris have agreed, was represented at the Conference in such a way that she might as well have been absent. She had no direct policy, she did nothing, she counted

for nothing. The demand for the Saar was justified on sentimental grounds! A French Minister said that it was not sufficient to have material reparations, but that they must have moral reparations also, and that the French demand corresponded to a need for moral reparations.

An agreement was then brought about. The Saar mines, both those belonging to the State and those belonging to private persons, were ceded *in perpetuity* to France, as compensation for the *temporary damage* inflicted by the Germans on the mines of the Pas-de-Calais. The Saar territory was ceded to the League of Nations for fifteen years. After fifteen years the population will have to decide by means of a referendum whether they wish to belong to France or to Germany. The League of Nations governs the Saar through the medium of a Commission of five members, of whom one is a Frenchman, and one chosen by the non-French inhabitants. The Commission possesses all the powers formerly possessed by the German Empire. It administers justice, raises taxes, and fixes the expenditure. An appendix, full of surprises as usual, regulates the condition of the whole of the Saar territory. French coinage has been introduced, arrangements for collecting tribute have been laid down with a view to future annexation, and the district has been included in the French customs-area; that is to say, the Saar, since 1919, has been economically separated from Germany.

The French ex-Minister Dariac had noticed the great difficulty of persuading the citizens of the Saar, all of them Germans, to become Frenchmen. But he remarked that it was possible to succeed with a policy which should be *nuancée*, *prudente*, *soutenue*, by dismissing German officials, by permeating the schools, and by winning over the clergy with gifts.

On 7th March, 1919, the leaders of all political parties in the Saar, with the approval of all the workmen, asserted

their firm intention not to be separated from their German native land. All the representative bodies associated themselves with this resolution. The nine deputies of the Saar in the Assembly of Weimar voted against accepting the Treaty of Versailles. As the feeling of the people was unanimous, it was therefore necessary to adopt every kind of stratagem in order to convert the inhabitants and change the situation. It was not sufficient merely to be strong, according to the advice of Dariac; it was necessary to be clever also. The Commission of Government appointed by the League of Nations began to function on 20th February, 1920, and worked on entirely French lines. According to the appendix to Article 50 of the treaty, three representatives of neutral states were to form part of the Commission. On the other hand, the presidency of the Commission was entrusted to the French Councillor of State, Rault; the other members included a Belgian, Lambert (*i.e.* practically a French agent); a Dane who had lived at Paris for many years, Count Moltke Huitfeld; a Canadian, Mr. Waugh; and a representative of the people of the Saar, von Boch. The tone which the Commission adopted from the first, and the measures which it introduced, were so unjust and so obviously directed to facilitating the work of French penetration, that von Boch, representing the citizens of the Saar, resigned. His place was filled by a mean-minded, interfering man, a certain Dr. Hector, who had been a French agent since 1919, and, as Burgomaster of Saarlouis, had unjustly transformed a petition of economic character to the Communal Council into a declaration in favour of France.

He was a man capable of any kind of misdeed. He had begun his campaign of falsehood on the 24th July, 1919, and on the 15th January, 1920, he had sent an address of loyalty to Clemenceau, in the name of the Communal Council of his city. When his false representations were

brought to light, the communal councillors of all parties, Centrumpartei, Liberal Volkspartei, Vereinigte Sozialdemokratische Partei, Deutsche Demokratische Partei, joined together and compelled the falsifier to explain why he had written that the mayor and the municipality of Saarlouis wished, after being boycotted by Prussia, to express their affection for France. The falsifier declared on oath that he did not remember one of the two documents which he was charged with writing, and that the other was not true. He was convicted of falsification and denounced for perjury, and even his counsel, at the hearing of the case on 3rd March, 1920, had to admit that a crime had been committed. None the less, the falsifier went unpunished, and retained his high office in the government.

The Commission therefore had three members out of five who were nothing but French agents, and a fourth was working in the same direction. Later, Waugh sent in his resignation, as he obviously did not wish to be associated in a criminal task. Thus there disappeared whatever guarantee there might have been of seriousness and rectitude.

The episode of Dr. Hector is not an isolated instance. Many delinquents of the same breed among Germans of lower moral standard have been employed in the Ruhr, in Bavaria, and throughout the Rhine Provinces — apostles of disorder, false patriots, and excited nationalists, who were working in different ways upon the same task of disintegration.

The Commission of Government of the Saar, which has sovereign powers, has become nothing else than an organisation of penetration, aiming at the corruption of municipal life and the opening of a passage for France on to an entirely German territory.

According to the Treaty of Versailles, there can be no troops in the Ruhr, but merely a local police force. Never-

theless, the French Government, under a pretext of protecting the mines handed over by the treaty and the factories acquired by force, has sent French troops up to as many as 11,120 men, and has kept more than 5,000 permanently there. When the Saar was a German province and Germany was accused of militarism, there were only two small military garrisons in the Saar, at Saarbrücken and at Saarlouis. To-day there is a French garrison in almost every small town; a large number of buildings have been requisitioned, thus increasing the housing crisis; and new barracks are even being erected, with vast stores of munitions. It has happened also that the communes, as in the occupied areas, have been compelled to supply quarters and furniture for the families of French officers. The troops commit every kind of abuse, and military tribunals even claim the right of trying free citizens. The League of Nations in February, 1923 (that is to say, without undue haste), decided to organise the local police force in order to permit the retirement of the troops which had been sent in violation of the treaty. Every precaution, however, is taken slowly, and is often carried out in bad faith. The Commission of Government of the Saar, which is, or ought to be, the sovereign power, gives no ear to complaints, especially against the French troops; and when strikes have taken place the French soldiers have committed deeds of such brutality as were not even committed in Russia in the worse times of Czarism.

German employees, even those born in the Saar, have been to a large extent expelled and replaced by Frenchmen. The press, which expressed the free opinion of the people, has been suppressed. The most delicate offices have been entrusted to delinquents of the type of Dr. Hector, who, as Minister of Public Assistance, confined himself to obstructing the payment of wretched pensions to old officials and men disabled in the war.

According to the Treaty of Versailles, the old laws were to be preserved, and could not be revoked by the Commission of Government except with the consent of representatives elected by the people. The same was to hold good with regard to taxes. The Commission of Government, after having tried to evade this stipulation in every possible way, decided that a National Council must be elected. Notwithstanding every kind of violence, twenty-six candidates were elected who were purely German and opposed to the proposals of the Commission, together with two Communists and two representatives of independent peasant-farmers and landed proprietors, who were supported by the French party. Nevertheless many arbitrary measures have been introduced contrary to the treaty and to the feelings of the people.

The sentimental claim to the Saar invoked by Tardieu served only to initiate the policy of the iron and coal interests. Thus all efforts were practically reduced to appropriating the workshops. When France became owner of the coal-mines, she began by dismissing the whole of the German staff; and Loucheur, whose experience in business matters is well known to everyone in France, sent one of his personal confidants, Commandant Rieche, as head of a so-called *service industriel* instituted by the French military authorities. The workshops which were not disposed to pass over to French capitalists, or to endure their control, were subjected to all kinds of persecution. They were even kept short of coal, so that some of them could not function. Everyone knows what took place in the factories of Mannesmann, of Sturm, and of Röchling. It was a case of capitulating or dying. Thus the French in a brief space of time took possession of the most important businesses without an effort, and immediately replaced the whole of the German staff by Frenchmen.

Expulsions and persecutions of citizens of the Saar

followed each other in cynical succession from the very first. Life was made intolerable for many Germans. Not only was French coinage imposed upon them, but also French instruction. I have read a serious document, a protest which the German Foreign Minister sent to the League of Nations on 18th January, 1923. After having reminded the League that paragraph 28 of the appendix to Articles 46 and 50 of the Treaty of Versailles guaranteed German schools and the use of the German tongue to the inhabitants of the Saar, he showed with irrefutable proofs that the Commission of Government of the Saar aimed at ousting the German language and German culture, and at placing all the schools in the hands of France. The Germans prefer not to send their children to school at all, and therefore the schools have had to be closed in many communes. The German Parliament has raised its protest in vain, and things are going from bad to worse. The stamps, at the orders of the French General Wirkel, are no longer marked "Saar" but "Sarre"; the German Press has been suppressed, or the censorship prevents it from giving any account of the crimes and acts of injustice which are taking place. Some papers, which reprinted articles by Lloyd George and myself, have even been sequestrated. The French officers show publicly on every possible occasion that they are the masters of the Saar, and that they do not attach any importance to a future referendum. The citizens of the Saar, although they are all German, have no longer a fatherland. Many have been condemned or arrested by French military authorities, who have no right to try them. To whom can they turn? The President of the Governing Commission is a French Councillor of State, its members are all Frenchmen, and the President's principal colleagues are men of the morality and independence of Dr. Hector, a confessed falsifier and a professional delinquent.

The Governing Commission has entrusted France with the protection of those citizens of the Saar who live abroad. What a mockery of justice! From the moment when the Saar was disputed and was to form the subject of a referendum, it should have been entrusted to a neutral state, or at least to a state which had no interest in the dispute. Yet, while the Saar is, during the period of fifteen years laid down by the Treaty of Versailles, an autonomous state governed by the League of Nations, those German citizens of the Saar who live in Germany are under the protection of the French Government. If they wish to enter their own country they must ask permission from the French consul. If they wish to go to America they must obtain a passport from the French consul. German politicians who wish to go to the Saar must obtain permission from France, who refuses such permission at her pleasure. She has refused it to the biggest industrial leaders, to the most esteemed political chiefs, and even to such people as Chancellor Stresemann. No modern people has ever witnessed such absurdities or such an unheard-of mixture of violence and fraud, which surpasses even the criminal caprice of men like Dr. Hector. The League of Nations has been a network of intrigue and a defender of violence. No one ever foresaw, however, that it would be capable of such intrigues as this.

To whom should the citizens of the Saar turn when attacked so unfairly? To the League of Nations? It would be like complaining about the misdeeds of a brigand to his employer.

During the Genoa Conference they tried to put forward their grievances to the heads of the European governments. The report of the Conference which relates that incident is a monument of cynicism. When Brennus arrived at Rome with the Gauls he spoke in the same way. The President of the Conference proposed that the

memorial should be consigned to the archives. Lloyd George remarked that the question must be examined by the Allied and Associated Powers who had signed the Treaty of Versailles, and that therefore the memorial should be sent to them. Barthou, who has always been inclined to show even less moderation than Poincaré, replied, as head of the French delegation, that the question of the Saar could not be touched by the Conference in any way. The memorial, therefore, ought not to be sent to the Allied and Associated Powers; it ought not even to be sent to the archives, because the simple fact of sending it there indicated a consideration of the question to which the French delegation could not consent.

To whom then ought the inhabitants of the Saar to turn, all of them Germans, who are regarded as foreigners in their own country?

The referendum will have to be taken in 1935. No amount of violence will prevent the Germans of the Saar from wishing to return to Germany. But what are referendums worth?

The ex-Minister Dariac has clearly stated that there was a need to work not only with the *manière forte* but also with cleverness. But cleverness serves for nothing. The lot of Upper Silesia has shown what value the France of Poincaré attached to treaties and referendums. French politicians, therefore, openly expressed their intention of profiting by Germany's difficulties and of annexing the Saar as part of the reparations. It follows from this that men ought to be handed over in payment for goods, just as in ancient times victorious armies reduced the vanquished to slavery.

I have read in the *Echo National* of 23rd February, 1923, an account of a banquet held by the *Union du Commerce et de l'Industrie*, under the presidency of Louis Dubois, an ex-Minister and a politician greatly to the fore. At this banquet the French deputy Fevry spoke at

length on the Saar and on the future of that region, the wealth of whose coal and ceramic industries is known to everyone. He spoke of the good results obtained, particularly by the French administration of the mines and the introduction of French coinage. He discussed other suggestions of greater efficacy, and concluded by asserting that the opportunity was favourable to *regulate* the question of the Saar, at the moment *où se pose dans son ensemble le problème des réparations*. Similar contempt for treaties was never shown by responsible men or by Members of Parliament before. Deputy Fevry is a member of the *bloc national*, and forms part of that *Entente Républicain*, which also calls itself *démocratique*; and the *Union du Commerce et de l'Industrie* is a powerful organisation which includes the chief figures of the French economic world.

The Saar has proved three things. It has shown that the war was not fought for Alsace-Lorraine, since France was making secret agreements with Russia from January, 1917, onwards to appropriate the Saar; it has shown how much faith is attached to the treaties by the victors who declared that they were fighting against German imperialism and for the independence of the peoples; and it has shown how much the League of Nations is worth in its present form.

Everyone, especially in America, where the dispute about reparations is still maintained, ought to read the book published in the early months of 1923 by an esteemed English writer, Sidney Osborne, entitled *The Saar Question: a disease spot in Europe*.

One cannot scan that book without feeling profoundly humiliated at the state of what is still called European civilisation.

6. *The invasion of the Ruhr and the control of Europe's coal and iron as means of obtaining economic power and military supremacy for France*.—In the early months of

1920 I was at Paris for meetings of Prime Ministers. Much was spoken about Germany's payments, and the difficulty was beginning to be seen even then. For the first time I heard the Ruhr spoken of not in a vague or indefinite form, but as a clearly-defined scheme. One of the most responsible statesmen said to me one day: "The only effective policy is to occupy the Ruhr."

I was surprised, and did not express any opinion. Afterwards I heard conversation around me of the kind which has no definite object but which serves to feel the ground.

A year afterwards, when I had resigned my position as Prime Minister of Italy, a well-known journalist came to me and asked for an interview. I did not wish to give an interview, and confined myself to an exchange of courtesies.

"What do you think of the occupation of the Ruhr?" he asked.

I replied that such an act was not countenanced by the Treaty of Versailles, and that consequently I could not express an opinion.

Later, I read with much interest Tardieu's book on the peace, which was an account of the negotiations at Paris. Tardieu and Loucheur were the two chief authors of the Treaty of Versailles. The second was, and still is, the soul of the French iron and steel trade, while the first enjoys the well-earned affection of the leaders of that industry. No book of the future will damage France so much as that of Tardieu's. He wished to show by writing it that Clemenceau and his colleagues, contrary to the statements of Poincaré and of those in military circles, had obtained for France the greatest possible number of concessions; that the concessions obtained were solid ones and not merely superficial; and that great cleverness had been shown in getting America to depart from her proposals, and in obtaining even that which

was contrary to Wilson's pronouncements. There is also an effort to show on every page that Germany had lost all that she could lose, even beyond all expectations. Anyone who writes about peace will find in Tardieu's book the strongest of arguments to demonstrate the violation of all pledges, the dark origin of the great reparations-snare, and also the vast deceit which is poisoning the life of the world. Tardieu very often, like Poincaré, reveals many intentions in a simple phrase. Poincaré says that the French, as a result of the victory, must pay lower taxes than before the war. There we have the whole programme. Tardieu says on page 294, in his note on the Saar: "If the coal of the Saar were found under the soil of the Ruhr, France would ask nothing more. We ask for more because the soil of the Saar has been French."

Without entering into the question as to whether the soil of the Saar ever has been French, for how long, to what extent, and for what reasons, it is characteristic that France now wants both the soil of the Saar and the coal of the Ruhr, under two different pretexts.

The Ruhr was the inevitable error, the inevitable stage of the iron and coal programme. Poincaré has been only an actor in this drama. Its authors are the iron-masters, who control so large a part of the press, and therefore of public opinion. French nationalism and imperialism would have found no echo in the popular mind if they had not been considered as a problem of wealth and power.

The Ruhr is the last stage in seven years of continued effort, which began with the secret negotiations of Petrograd to obtain Russia's support in a demand for the basin of the Saar, proceeded to the Treaty of Versailles which, although it did not grant the surface, granted the mines of the Saar, and passed through all the strife to obtain large quantities of coal under the name of reparations, to the partition of Upper Silesia, which was

imposed contrary to the treaty, contrary to the referendum, and contrary to logic. The Ruhr was its necessary complement.

The conflict which was brought into existence assumed a simple and clear character from the very first. Germany, although deprived of four-fifths of her iron-ore, still possessed coal in sufficient quantities to maintain the iron-trade, which formed a large part of her power. To carry these on, she had to remain in possession of her coal, or at least of such part of it as was absolutely essential, and would have to find her iron in other countries, in Spain, Sweden, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, etc. France, wishing to prevent Germany from maintaining her position, could not do anything else but upset her coal-output, and, after her previous successes, could not do otherwise than go to the Ruhr.

It must be borne in mind that the Ruhr is not only the centre of Germany's economic system, but also of a large part of the life of Europe, and that, before the war, its industry was the cause of the cheapness of a large number of articles, and the fountain-head of German prosperity. In no country has modern civilisation realised such great technical progress as on the Ruhr. Its enormous quantity of metal-workers and of chemical workers represented the most notable element of industrial progress which is now at the disposal of mankind. In less immoral civilisations than that in which we live, France and Germany would have tried to come to an understanding between themselves, and to organise their output in the form most advantageous to the two nations. As a result of the treaties, France possesses the largest quantity of iron, and Germany the largest quantity of coal, on the continent of Europe. But the iron-lords who were responsible for so large a share in the propagation of the war-spirit in Germany before the war, now find themselves opposed by the iron-lords of France, who are still more

unscrupulous, and are disposed to overturn the whole of Europe in order to realise their plan of dominion. Politicians are often the conscious or unconscious executors of this plan, with their large number of patriotic phrases and verbal statements of justice and right, which have nothing to do with actual facts.

Before the war, in 1913, the world's output of coal was 1342 million tons, of which 517 millions came from the United States and 292 millions from Great Britain. On the continent of Europe, Germany came first, and a long way in front of the others, with 191 million tons of coal and 87 million tons of lignite. Then came France at a great distance behind, with an output of 41 million tons of coal and lignite.

The world's output of raw iron was 175 million tons. As with almost all raw materials, the United States came first with 63 million tons, Germany followed with 38 million tons, France with 22 million, Great Britain with 16 million, and Spain and Russia with little less than 10 million tons.

In the production of cast-iron, pig-iron, steel, and in almost all metal-working industries, Germany had taken the first place in Europe, and surpassed the rest of the world in the perfection of her technical methods in many branches of industry.

Almost all of her great production of coal and iron, and the manufacture of goods from them, was concentrated in the Ruhr. The manufacturers of the Ruhr, by a clever system of associations, unions, and syndicates, utilised all the resources of Lorraine, Upper Silesia, the Saar, and even Luxemburg.

What is the Ruhr? It is a small territory, like a small county of any one of the American states. Yet there exists no spot on earth, not even Pennsylvania, in which intelligent human effort has been able to concentrate such vast productive power in so small a space. Out of

190 million tons of coal which Germany produced in 1913 (not counting lignite), the Ruhr alone produced 115 millions. In the production of cast-iron, steel, sulphate of ammonia, and many other productions, the Ruhr held the primacy of Europe. German science had realised some of those great advances which constituted the triumph and the pride of their country; colouring materials, medicinal products, perfumes, etc., mark successive stages of the German genius. Coal is the production of the forests which existed in the primeval vegetation of our planet. Those forests contained in their innumerable plants immense quantities of colours, perfumes, and medicinal substances. The utilisation of the by-products of coal has undoubtedly been studied in many manufacturing countries. It was, however, the pride of German science to have realised the most immense progress in these subjects, and the manufacturers of the Ruhr have as large a number of expert technicians and chemists as any country on earth. German science set itself the special task of rediscovering in the by-products of coal an immense series of chemical and medicinal products and of carrying out the reverse process of that accomplished by Nature.

Before the war the Ruhr was Germany's great reservoir. Its great labours permitted the purchase of a large part of those foreign food-stuffs, which cost three milliard gold marks, and of which Germany, very rich in men and poor in soil, had great need for her overflowing population. A German scientist has said that even potatoes are a by-product of the coal of the Ruhr, which provided fertilisers cheaply. Coal, metal-working, colouring materials, chemical products, chemical and weaving industries, the whole life of Germany was partly linked to that of the Ruhr. To check the production of the Ruhr meant keeping Germany at a standstill; to paralyse it meant paralysing the whole of German life.

All the great German industrial firms, Thyssen, Stinnes, Krupp, Haniel, Klochner, Mannesmann, etc., are concentrated in the Ruhr. Each of these firms employs more than 100,000 workmen, and consumes considerably more coal than the whole of Italy does on its railways, navigation, manufactures and agriculture.

If France really desired the restoration of her devastated territories she would have but one interest—to allow the Ruhr to reconstruct its powers, and to allow the whole of Germany, devastated and tormented, to increase its output. Instead of this, France has done nothing since 1920 but turn her eyes to the Ruhr and find all kinds of pretexts for invading it. As I have already related, Loucheur and Tardieu very modestly demanded 25 per cent. of the shares of German industrial societies. Poincaré, with his habitual modesty, spoke of 60 per cent.

No serious-minded person ever thought for a moment that the occupation of the Ruhr would help to bring greater sums towards the reparations. Germany had paid beyond her capacity. France, and perhaps even Great Britain, if they had been defeated, would have been doubled up under an economic burden much less than that against which Germany has been able to hold out. She has been able to hold out against many losses of treasure, often carried out simply for purposes of destruction, solely because of her marvellous spirit of organisation and of discipline. We shall see how Germany has given reparations beyond all expectation, and up to the extreme limit of possibility.

One of the principal organs of the French steel and iron trade outside France wrote that the occupation of the Ruhr and the appropriation of its coal, coupled with a neglect to use it, have a value not only economic, but military. The French occupation, in one way or another, under one pretext or another, tends to become stable, it says, and has a significance which is at the same time

economic, political, and military. If modern war is the synthesis of the greatest industrial processes, taking its weapons from the great mechanical and chemical factories and paralysing and controlling them, Germany's economic power is not only being ruined, so this journal maintains, but Germany's arsenal of war is also being permanently destroyed.

The occupation of the Ruhr, therefore, formed part of a vast plan in the iron and steel interests, was contemplated in 1919, and completely formulated in 1920. It could not, however, take place without a sufficient preparation of the world's public opinion. It was a matter not merely of an obvious violation of the treaty, but of an unprecedented act of international piracy, which had to be justified somehow.

It was after the decisions of May, 1921, and the occupation of cities on the right bank of the Rhine (Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Ruhrort, etc.), that the campaign for the occupation of the Ruhr was intensified. Either the Germans would pay or France would invade the Ruhr. The President of the General Financial Commission (A. Dariac) laid down the plan in his report, and proved the advantages of the occupation to the hesitating deputies. Naturally the Germans were asked for what they did not possess, or could not give without their complete ruin. That was a method of getting them to declare their inability to pay, and of exacting penalties, which meant practically the occupation of the Ruhr. The Ruhr district, Dariac noted, was the principal factor of Germany's fortune, being based entirely on coal and iron, and on the products and by-products of those minerals. The greater part of the big German firms have their headquarters in the Ruhr, and the ten or twelve magnates who direct them, control, directly or indirectly, but in an absolute manner, the economic forces of the metal trade, of by-products of coal, of colouring materials,

navigation companies, importation and exportation, of raw materials and of manufactured products, etc.

There then began, in the French Press, and still more strongly in the press which represents French interests abroad (a press with a wide circulation throughout Europe and beyond), an agitation, slow at first and then more intense, for the invasion of the Ruhr. Fanciful stories were circulated about the mysterious influence of the big manufacturers of the Ruhr, especially of Stinnes. The German people, it was said, was resigning itself to paying the reparations, but the powerful lords of German industry were preventing the payments from being made!

¡Thus, while Germany was accused of intentionally depressing her currency, the magnates of the Ruhr were accused of piling up immense reserves abroad. In Germany itself certain newspapers, whose inspiration was not beyond suspicion, or whose fickleness at least was not beyond suspicion, attacked the big manufacturers of the Ruhr. It was then repeated in America, England and Italy that the invasion of the Ruhr was essential if reparations were to be obtained, and that they could not be obtained otherwise. There is also a newspaper in Italy which is the undisguised organ of an iron and steel group, and which, having undergone various unsatisfactory changes of fortune, is now trying to attach itself to the French iron and steel lords. All the objectives of the latter are openly supported. One can tell in advance what the iron manufacturers want and how their work is going, simply by reading that newspaper.

For the invasion of the Ruhr, not only was a *pretext* necessary, but also a *legal justification.* It was necessary to dissemble, so that it should not appear as if a military occupation was being carried out, but merely a technical occupation. It was sufficient to declare that Germany was not sending coal, and to send into the Ruhr, in the first instance, coal-experts only. The military invasion

was to follow, but merely as a necessary consequence, and was to appear to be due to German resistance.

A pretext for the occupation of the Ruhr was easily found. That servile instrument, that docile organ of every kind of abuse, the Reparations Commission, composed in general of stupid men, diplomats, bureaucrats, magistrates, etc., and directed by clever men, was always ready to declare whatever was wanted by the iron-lords.

One should read the deliberations of the Reparations Commission which declared Germany's intentional failure to pay, to see what a monument of bad faith and stupidity it was. Everyone already knew that a declaration of intentional non-fulfilment served only to justify an invasion. The occupation of the Ruhr based its justification on the fact that 21,000 cubic metres of timber, a million and a half tons of coal, and 131,000 telegraph poles had not been forwarded, or had not been forwarded up to time. A world-crisis was precipitated on miserable pretexts such as only the most shameless cynicism could justify.

As America had withdrawn and was no longer taking part in any of the movements of what was the Entente, Great Britain alone was left to oppose the occupation of the Ruhr. France then upheld the claim that any of the states interested in reparations could, acting alone, exact the penalties permitted by the treaty.

These penalties, however, did not exist at all, and it was necessary to exercise the imagination considerably to find them. He who seeks finds; but he who was seeking had perhaps already, without the knowledge of his allies and associates, and certainly without their exact knowledge, inserted in some appendix (not closely examined and perhaps not even read), a clause which, although concerned with some other matter, could be interpreted as applicable to the Ruhr. Such a clause in fact existed, and had already been invoked on another occasion, but not without causing surprise and mistrust in everyone.

The Franco-Belgian troops entered the Ruhr on 11th January, 1923. Poincaré thought it necessary to explain at once to the French Chamber the reasons and the rights of the occupation. Yet, although he is a clever advocate, never was there so poor a defence; but it must be added that never was there a more absurd case to be defended.

France drew the justification of her forcible action from paragraphs 17 and 18 of Appendix 11 to Section VIII., and from Article 248 of the Treaty of Versailles. Paragraph 17, with the appendix of which it forms part, is placed in the clauses of economic character dealing with reparations. It lays down that in case of non-fulfilment of any of the obligations of the treaty, the Reparations Commission will immediately notify such non-fulfilment to each of the powers concerned, adding to its notification all the proposals which it deems opportune, and indicating the measures to be adopted by reason of the non-fulfilment. Paragraph 18 lays down that the measures which the Allied and Associated Powers will have the right to adopt in case of intentional non-fulfilment on the part of Germany, and which Germany promises not to consider as hostile acts, can include acts of economic reprisal and prevention, and in general such other measures as the respective governments consider necessary in the circumstances.

When once intentional non-fulfilment had been declared by the Reparations Commission, it was necessary, in order to justify the invasion, to show that clauses of economic character could be transformed into military clauses, and that any of the Entente countries could, even without the agreement of the others, adopt coercive measures.

This Poincaré did without any hesitation. He maintained that the expression *telles autres mesures* is so general, so comprehensive, and so broad, as to permit of any-

thing. He added that it was the respective governments *qui ont le droit d'apprécier et de décider.*

As all that was absurd, it is not even worth discussing. The vanquished countries, after having laid down their arms in face of the general victory, would have been left at the mercy of any victorious state which, even without the consent of the others, wished to carry out a military occupation of fresh territory.

The Treaty of Versailles distinguished in every case between the Allied and Associated Powers taken as a whole and taken singly. The distinction is clearly drawn, for instance, in sub-sections A, B, C, of Article 296. Now paragraph 18 speaks of the measures which the Allied and Associated Powers shall have the right to take in the sense that, when dealing with reprisals, they are to be taken jointly. On the other hand, measures dealing with reprisals and non-fulfilment of an economic character cannot be anything but of economic character themselves. It is not possible even to admit the hypothesis of military measures to realise economic ends, without abolishing the sovereignty of the German state, which is expressly recognised by the Treaty of Versailles.

We shall see how, by a false interpretation of an economic clause, steps were taken to abolish not only the sovereignty of Germany, but also the most fundamental principles of international law, and to compel German citizens by violence to carry out operations contrary to the interests and honour of their country.

When Germany's economic failure had been declared, the French Government, in order to prevent the invasion of the Ruhr from provoking universal disdain, made a declaration which is still remembered, because it shows how the contrary was said to what was taking place. Italy experienced this method on another occasion, when France occupied Tunis, after the French Foreign Minister had declared to the Italian ambassador that they had

never thought of occupying it. Thus Poincaré always used to announce that no Frenchman had ever thought of taking any German territory; and yet, under his very presidency, the most authoritative people in France claimed large tracts of land in Germany.

When the pretext had been found in intentional non-fulfilment, and the justification in paragraph 18, it was still necessary to find a method of dissembling, by declaring that the occupation was not of a serious character, and that it was neither military nor political, when it was nothing but military and political.

This the French Government did in the Chamber on 11th January, 1923. The text of the declaration is on record. It declared that, on account of the insufficient supply of coal and timber on the part of Germany, France had decided to send to the Ruhr a Commission of Control, composed of engineers, merely to make sure that all payments due as reparations should be made, and to take all necessary measures to that end. The French Government, however, did not think for a moment of entering upon any military operations or on any occupation of a political character, and was employing soldiers solely to facilitate the work of the French engineers in contact with the German manufacturers, and to facilitate transport. The declaration added that there would be no disturbance and no change in the ordinary life of the people.

Coal-mine engineers were sought for in every direction, and even in Italy—perhaps because Italy has no coal-mines. The operation which was to increase the disorder of Europe, to pave the way for the ruin of Germany and for a world-crisis, was announced very quietly, almost as if it were a minor event of economic character or an act of every-day administration.

On the contrary, violence and death were immediately dealt out in the small area of the Ruhr. Instead of sending

a few soldiers to facilitate the task of the French engineers, five divisions under the command of two generals, two tanks, hundreds of aeroplanes, numerous white troops, and also, with delicate forethought, coloured troops, were concentrated in a district which is no larger than a small county. If the masterpieces of Gothic art on the Rhine and the cultured inhabitants of the Rhine provinces had seen the sons of African cannibals march past, as representatives of the new civilisation of the Treaty of Versailles, it was necessary, too, that the same spectacle should not be withheld from the citizens of the Ruhr, who include some of the most distinguished technicians of the world.

Immediately afterwards, the zone of military occupation was extended. Requisitions were made, as in the worst invasions in time of war, not merely of property, but also of person. Every coercive measure was adopted. French military tribunals tried German citizens, and distributed a large number of absurd and unjust condemnations. The orders of the French military authorities were to be executed by German officials and citizens; and those orders, which I have collected, constitute a monument of violence without parallel in modern history. In the first two months only, seventy-one officials were expelled from the administration of transport, fifty-five from the postal service, 279 from the financial service, more than a thousand from the municipal services, and 700 from the constabulary, As if the expulsions in the Ruhr were not sufficient, others were carried out on a large scale in the newly-invaded territories of the Palatinate, Bavaria, and Baden. The troops often entered into offices, disorganised and destroyed documents, took what they wanted, and prosecuted the clerks who remained at their posts. In a few weeks about eighty clerks were condemned to heavy penalties.

The most noble German patriots, men of high standing,

were treated with such brutality as often brought them to the verge of death. Cast haphazard into the worst prisons, into cells allocated to vagabonds, they were denied every aid, even that sent by the Red Cross. Among those who were arrested were burgomasters of large cities and men of high social standing. The working classes were treated with indescribable malevolence. Nothing was sacred, whether public buildings, private houses, hospitals, or alms-houses. Fraud was perpetrated with impunity, and was supplemented by the devastation of everything that could be put to any use. The pillage practised at Bochum and Oberhausen was extended to the public offices. In a region of intense commercial and industrial life, where the papers collected in offices and factories are always valuable because they are the records of all kinds of activity, nothing was secure any longer, not even the things which every manufacturer strives zealously to keep secret.

Two friends of mine, a Scandinavian and an American, who went into the newly-occupied Franco-Belgian territory, sent me a collection of photographs, of proclamations and orders by the military authorities, and of reports of the more serious acts of violence. I feel horror and disgust when writing on this subject. I have also received an address from women of the Ruhr who think that I can do something, and who relate horrible deeds. My American friend has collected photographs of deeds of fearful gravity, of men thrashed, of children killed, of houses and offices plundered, which not only seem incredible, but which only the most satanic misanthrope could think possible in modern men.

Perhaps the expression attributed to Clemenceau that there are twenty million Germans too many received its first application on a propitious occasion. The real object of the occupation of the Ruhr was two-fold—to settle the question of the supremacy of the steel and

iron interests, to increase the disorder of Germany's productions to such a point as to aggravate all the conditions of German life, and to bring about that chaos which alone can be the basis of disintegration. Revolution and reaction, the agitations of ecstatic nationalists and turbid communists, the outbreak of separatist movements, violent attempts at more solid national unions based on the idea of vengeance and therefore intolerant of all discipline, are equally useful.

Nothing could exasperate more than a long occupation of the Ruhr. Since January, 1923, the German Government has not been able to adopt or advise any measure except passive resistance. Germany is like a giant who, when on the point of losing a combat, believed in the words of his enemies, and surrendered. His enemies, in order to conquer him, had united and had put forth a great effort; but, as they had not succeeded, they promised him every advantage and every security in order to bring the fight to an end. Yet, when he laid down his arms, one of them armed himself to a formidable extent, deprived him of all his goods, humiliated him, and exasperated him. None of his enemies singly would have been able to beat him, or even to attack him. Now, however, the smallest of them, the Belgians and the Poles, take a satanic pleasure in tormenting him. But, since the giant will not die, and since his enemies will tire themselves out, no one can tell what will be their future unless they come to an agreement, or where European civilisation will end.

Belgium's action on the Ruhr was no less rough than that of France. This country, which was saved by all in the name of right, has not hesitated to violate every wholesome law of justice, the ownership of property, or the dignity of people. It has also pretended to believe in reparations solely because a few big industrial magnates threw their influence on to a compliant press. This same country has also its nationalism, or rather its nationalisms,

and does not allow the majority of its population, which is Flemish, to possess a single university in which the language of the majority is used. By going to the Ruhr, by going with France alone, and by severing itself from Great Britain, it has also severed itself from those principles which were its salvation; it has lost its halo of martyrdom; it has lost all prestige and all sympathy.

By going to the Ruhr, civilised peoples of Aryan race have reverted for the first time to the worst forms of mediæval spoliation. There is no sober-minded jurist who cannot see the horror of what has taken place. Inviolability of private property and inviolability of person were rules not only of international agreements, but also of common morality. In the name of what right have German citizens been arrested in time of peace and condemned and judged by foreign tribunals? Is there a single jurist in Europe who can, we will not say justify, but explain what has taken place? Even if there is one individual in the ordinarily honourable class of jurists who is ready to justify anything for a consideration, is there one so contemptible as to justify the Franco-Belgian tribunals of the Ruhr?

There are two Hague Conventions which regulate private property in case of military occupation. The first dates from 29th July, 1899, the second from 18th October, 1907. France and Belgium signed only the first. In this convention the destruction and sequestration of property belonging to the enemy is forbidden except when it is required by urgent military necessity (Articles 23 and 24). The honour and the rights of families, the life of individuals, and private property are to be respected (Article 26).

Further, requisitions in kind, or for services, cannot be demanded from municipalities or their inhabitants, except for the immediate needs of the army of occupation. They must be in proportion to the resources of

the country, and of such a kind as not to imply the compulsion of the people to take part in warlike operations against their own country (Article 52).

As for requisitions of person, it is a fundamental principle of law that in no case can the inhabitants of a country be forced to associate themselves with, or to take part in, any action contrary to the interests or the laws of their country. The Hague Convention of 1899 lays down that, in case of occupation in time of war, not only must the honour and the rights of families and the life of citizens be respected (Article 46), but also that it is forbidden to compel the people of any country to associate themselves in military operations against their own country (Article 44).

No convention, no international law, no regulation permitted France to sequestrate coal, coke, or other products. (It is needless to talk of Belgium, which, having become nationalistic, has no longer a national policy, as so often happens). The German authorities were under no obligation to obey any laws except those of their own country, and all the prosecutions carried out by Franco-Belgian tribunals constitute a juridical and moral enormity.

I have read the reports of some of the proceedings of the Franco-Belgian military tribunals. Nothing more shameful was committed in the worst ages of barbarism. Among other things, a shorthand report has been published of the prosecution of Baron Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach and the directors of his firm. This will be in the future a document typical of brutality and of violence. The events of 31st March, 1923, when an unjustifiable assault was made on the Krupp factory, and the attitude of the French troops on that occasion, are well known. There were thirteen killed and forty-one injured, many of them seriously. Yet it was decided, perhaps by way of intimidation, to work up a case

against Baron Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach. Perhaps there was an idea of striking at the German nation as personified in a man of such thoroughly German name and tradition. Baron Krupp was not personally responsible, even distantly. He was called to give evidence, and, scarcely had he presented himself to do so of his own free-will, when he was arrested without further ceremony. No better service could be rendered to the cause of truth than the publication and circulation of the evidence in the Krupp case. The French court-martial adopted methods similar to those used against Captain Dreyfus. Nothing was more ridiculous than the charge brought against Baron Krupp, which asserted that he and his directors had violated the first article of Order No. 22 of the French General-in-Command. The prosecution, led by a French Captain Duvert, without discussion, demanded in a few words enormous penalties, from a minimum of five to a maximum of fifteen years' imprisonment, and from a minimum of fifty million to a maximum of a hundred million marks as a fine in the case of each defendant. The court-martial increased the penalties, carrying them to twenty years in the case of some of the accused, and carried out the suggestions of the prosecution in the case of Baron Krupp.

Shortly afterwards, there was the comic yet tragic spectacle of German citizens, condemned by a French military tribunal in the Ruhr, being compelled to appeal against their sentence to the French Cour de Cassation at Paris. What a sequence of juridical and moral absurdities! The occupation of the Ruhr was carried out, not by the victorious states of the Entente, but by France and Belgium, on the basis of a false interpretation of an appendix to the economic section of the peace-treaty. The occupation was represented as an expedition of engineers to assure the delivery of coal and timber. The generals, on the other hand, immediately

published in the occupied territory a series of ordinances which deprived the German state of all sovereignty, and French military tribunals condemned even the most distinguished Germans solely for having obeyed the laws of their country, and for refusing to lend themselves to the commission of acts against their native land.

On the 9th August, 1923, therefore, the Cour de Cassation of Paris considered the appeal of Krupp and those who had been condemned with him. The court held that foreign territories, even though occupied as the result of a war, were hostile territories, and that therefore the competent military authorities had power to carry out such acts as might be required for penal purposes and were likely to maintain the safety of the occupying troops.

Krupp's counsel, the Paris barrister Coutard, had brought forward the statement that, according to the Treaty of Versailles, the Ruhr territory could not be considered absolutely as hostile territory, since the occupation, in conformity with paragraph 18 of the appendix, was merely a pacific measure of economic character, and the treaty required Germany not to consider it a hostile act.

The Procurator-General, Mornet, in order to obtain the dismissal of the appeal, was obliged to say the contrary to what the French Government had always proclaimed, and which Poincaré had always asserted in his Sunday discourses. That is to say, he had to deny the pacific character of the occupation of the Ruhr and regard it as a measure of compression in defence of French interests, and an immediate consequence of the war.

The Cour de Cassation therefore found itself faced with a dilemma from which it could not escape. It had either to recognise the pacific nature of the occupation according to the thesis of the French Government and of Poincaré, and therefore to annul the sentence of the

military tribunal; or it had to deny the thesis of the government and to declare that the occupation, carried out in spite of paragraph 18, was a warlike act. It did not hesitate to choose the second of these courses, although everyone saw in it a humiliation of the French Government and a negation of its every act.

The Germans could not adopt any other attitude in the Ruhr than that of passive resistance, and the Berlin Government could not do otherwise than protest and assist the inhabitants of the invaded territories. Nevertheless, as the occupation had assumed a form of atrocious violence worse than that of territories occupied in time of war, production was immediately arrested, economic disorder was increased throughout Germany, and the issue of paper-money increased tremendously, thus leading the way not only to the collapse of Germany, but also to unrest throughout Europe.

The *apparent reason* was therefore Germany's intentional failure to supply certain quantities of coal and timber. For a long time passive resistance in the Ruhr has reduced the output to such an extent that the supply has been reduced to a minimum. In no country in the world, least of all in Germany, can technicians and workmen work under the threat of foreign bayonets. Germany before the occupation had given beyond her powers, had given beyond the limits of all fair expectation. Since the occupation she has given much less, and she will give less and less in proportion as violence disorganises her output.

I have before me figures dealing with the supply of coal from Germany between January and August, 1922, and January and August, 1923. The plunder of the troops of occupation has been a mad affair, and its only effect has been that France has received less coal than before, and that the price of coal has been raised abroad.

As far as the declared objects of the occupation are

concerned, therefore, the invasion of the Ruhr has been a complete failure.

The *real object* of the occupation, however, was to realise the programme of the French iron and steel trade —to dissolve the whole of Germany's industry by occupying for a long time (always under different pretexts) the territory of the Ruhr, to paralyse all German activity, to deprive the mark of all value, to produce such an economic crisis as to arouse the most violent hates, revolutions, reactions, civil wars, patriotic and revolutionary extremes, and in this way to bring about the rupture of German unity and the formation of a number of new states after a large number of catastrophes and ruinous measures. It is an old programme, which could not be revealed in its entirety at Versailles; but it found in the treaty all the means and all the pretexts to enable it to develop with a fulness and a continuity which demonstrate, in spite of all changes of personnel, clearly defined schemes and business organisations which overtop politics—organisations very sure of their programme and of their policy.

As far as the undeclared objects of the occupation are concerned therefore, the invasion of the Ruhr was a complete success.

We shall see shortly whether this success, by injuring all the nations on earth and disorganising the economic life of the world, even though it crushes the vanquished, will not prove to be also the ruin of the victors.

7. *Economic ruin, chaotic circulation, and insecurity of social relationships as means to the political dissolution of Germany.*—To disorganise Germany's economic life and to make everything uncertain and insecure, to disorganise the German spirit by accentuating differences of opinion on such subjects as separatism, nationalism, communism, and everything which might contribute to disorder—that was what Hanotaux proposed immediately after

the armistice, only in more genteel tones; and it was that which Dariac, President of the General Financial Commission, had supported, even though he expressed it in more guarded language. That was the programme which Poincaré wished to realise, and which had the powerful support of the iron trade and its organs, and therefore of a large part of the press even outside France.

If there had been a desire for the largest possible amount of reparations, both of money and goods, the best thing would have been to have disarmed Germany and then to have allowed her the widest possible development of her productions and the largest possible increase in trade. A debtor cannot live and pay his debts, especially if they reach enormous figures, unless he is allowed to work and to increase his activities. He must have credits too, so that he can develop his commerce without obstacles. This is so obvious, and has been repeated so many times, that there is no need to say it again. But that was the very thing which France did not want. She was afraid that Germany, having lost her military power and become a democratic country, would concentrate all her efforts on production, and would lay the foundations of new greatness and dominion. Forced to live and to pay huge sums, Germany would have been compelled, in order to free herself from her chains, to work feverishly, to produce more, and to acquire new markets. Although deprived of her iron, she still had a great deal of her coal. She could have acquired iron in different directions, and thus maintain the power of the Ruhr and the organisation of Upper Silesia, which the French iron trade, supreme in politics, wished to acquire.

The logical process of ruin has been continually unfolded and is still being unfolded in all its fulness. The French people were told that they would have an indemnity not merely enormous, but of ridiculous and

incredible dimensions. The government repeatedly stated that that indemnity would not only pay for the reconstruction of the devastated areas, but would set the budget to rights and would cover its deficit. The small savers, who are very numerous in France, were assured of the firm foundation of their credits, even though the national finances were in disorder. They were made to believe, by Poincaré and others, that their taxes would be, not merely reduced, but even reduced to below pre-war level. The conviction was disseminated that France could obtain absolute security only by means of a long occupation, not merely on the left bank of the Rhine, but also of other German territory. When all this had been done, the policy of dissolution and violence could not stand still. It had to pass, from error to error, to the consequences which I foresaw from the first moment, and which few enlightened men saw until a year or so ago—consequences which the deluded masses, blinded by prejudice and by the spirit of violence, cannot see even yet. I have already shown many times what Germany can pay; and in 1919 and 1920, as Prime Minister of Italy, I openly stated my thoughts to the representatives of Great Britain and France. For more than a quarter of a century the calculation of the wealth of nations, of their production and their annual capitalisation, has formed the subject of my careful study. No economist can honestly support the stupidities which have been artfully diffused among the public and artfully maintained for political ends. But who can now speak the truth in France, where payments of twenty-five milliards a year for long periods of years have been spoken of?

Mr. J. M. Keynes has written pages of admirable precision on Germany's ability to pay, and a Swedish economist, Gustav Cassel, not to mention many other writers, has written very fairly and profoundly on the same subject.

In addition, the book published by the American Institute of Economics, by H. G. Moulton and C. E. McGuire, called *Germany's Capacity to Pay*, is of particular value, both for the soberness of judgment which pervades it, and for the precision and accuracy of its researches; it can and ought to be the basis of all serious discussion.

The payment of foreign debts involves two problems. The first is an internal problem and concerns budgets and fiscal measures; the second is external, and concerns trade with foreign countries. It is a matter of seeing how national income can be transformed into means of making payments abroad. There are some means of payment which are soon exhausted, such as gold, and there are dangerous means which, if put into wide execution, lead inevitably to ruin, such as paper-money. In reality, in addition to the direct supply of services, payment cannot be made except by either sending goods directly to the creditor-country, or by exporting goods to other countries and by giving up, in whole or in part, one's own claims to credit. It is necessary, therefore, for exports to exceed imports even in the invisible elements of the budget.

People often fall into the mistake of believing that capacity to pay can be measured by annual capitalisation, *i.e.* by the difference between production and consumption. This difference is, however, to a large extent made up by technical means of production, such as agricultural improvements, new machinery, or new plant. Only a limited part of the annual production can be invested in an exportable form. Every kind of control, every kind of violence, certainly does not increase the exports, and hinders production.

In the twenty years before the war, from 1894 to 1913, the commercial balance was never favourable to Germany. She made up the difference between imports and exports (and not always easily) by the interest on foreign

loans, by freightage, and by her system of banks and insurance. It is simply puerile to imagine that Germany, under the pressure of the victors, can considerably develop her exports and diminish her imports, because they are closely linked. Examining German trade of the year 1913, one finds that the luxury-trade in all its branches did not account for imports to the value of more than 763 millions out of a total of 10,770 millions, and exports to the value of 533 millions out of a total of 10,097 millions. The mass of the imports consisted of raw materials necessary for manufactures, and of food-stuffs essential to the life of the people. Each successive reduction has only caused a reduction in Germany's capacity for work. Germany, having had to cede her credits, and a great part, in fact almost all, of her transferable wealth, has been able to export only to a limited extent; and *vice versâ*, she has had to put forth every effort to obtain the most essential raw materials. In 1919, her imports, expressed in gold marks, were 6·6 milliards, and her exports 1·8 milliards; in 1920 her imports were 7 milliards and her exports 5·1 milliards; in 1921 her imports were 5·7 milliards and her exports 3·6 milliards; while in 1922 her imports were 6·2 milliards and her exports 4 milliards. On the whole, excluding what was paid in reparations, the difference between imports and exports amounted to more than 11 milliard gold marks. This explains the great depression of the German currency. Germany has indeed, an extremely unfavourable balance sheet.

On the other hand, Germany has had to pay enormous sums by way of reparations. Reckoning up what she has paid in various ways up to 30th September, 1922, we get a total of 44·7 milliard gold marks and 46·7 milliard paper marks.

This American calculation gives the lie to the news published and circulated by the French Press, in which

much has frequently been said about 8 milliards; and it confirms all the calculations which I have published on various occasions. Germany, in order to be able to execute payment abroad, has had to yield all the credits which were still left to her. In spite of every effort, Germany, having lost her richest agricultural lands, has seen famine encroaching everywhere, and her food-supply has been reduced to an alarming degree.

The fiscal situation before the war already made many sacrifices necessary, and there was frequently a deficit in the budget. Only in three years between 1886–7 and 1913–14, did the German budget not show a deficit. The war, in addition to producing very large deficits in the budgets of the various states, carried the Imperial deficit to 137·1 milliards, and the war debt increased to 97·6 milliards, without counting the Treasury Bonds.

Germany, moreover, finding it necessary to make large payments as a result of the treaty (inter-allied commissions, military occupations, and reparations), found herself forced to make further and further issues of bonds. All her taxation was never able to keep pace with the payments to be made, and hence there was a necessity to make still further issues, with the result that, at the end of the financial year 1922–3, Germany's financial situation was already desperate.

The publication of the Institute of Economics sums up with great precision not only all the facts concerning Germany's great losses, and all payments made up to the time of publication in every form, but also all the reasons for Germany's depression. Granted that Germany's wealth before the war amounted to 300 milliard gold marks, she has lost, owing to losses of territory, consignment of transferable goods, and damages sustained, at least 135 milliards. She is thus now in a condition of not being able to provide even for her own most indispensable wants.

Her circulation, which was formerly of reasonable dimensions, had risen, on 31st December, 1918, to 22·2 milliards only. At the end of 1919 it amounted to 35·7 milliards. Afterwards, particularly as a result of the reparations policy, it rose very rapidly to 316·8 milliards on the 30th September, 1922, to 1280 milliards on 31st December, 1922, and 8513 milliards on 31st May, 1923. The proportion to the gold reserve, which was ·55 per cent. in 1913, fell to ·1 per cent. at the end of 1918, to ·03 per cent. at the end of 1919, and to ·00009 per cent. on 31st May, 1923. The rapid inflation, caused by the policy of reparations, seemed at first almost an advantage to industry and commerce; but afterwards it became their complete ruin.

According to a very accurate publication made by the German Office of Statistics, the total amount of loans raised by Germany on already existing securities, loans coming from current productions and those in cash (excluding certain controvertible elements which American statistics have valued), amounted at the end of December, 1922, to 42·78 milliard gold marks; everything included, it was not far short of 50 milliard gold marks. Estimating the loans of various kinds effected as a result of the treaty, we get 55·91 milliards. When regarded fairly, the figures supplied by Germany, and those of the Institute of Economics of New York, coincide.

Germany, in order to increase her output and make payments towards the reparations, ought, after her great losses of territory and raw materials, to have refurnished herself largely from abroad. This has not been possible, on account of the collapse of her currency and her inability to export. The profound upheaval of the public finances, and the inflation, were only the effect of the policy of reparations, which aimed at producing the collapse of the mark, and thence not merely anarchy of production, but anarchy of the whole of commercial

life. Germany, under the continual threatening demand for goods and loans, having to pay everything at home with the sums at her disposal, had recourse more and more to inflation, *i.e.* to the issue of Treasury Bonds by the Reichsbank.

Germany introduced taxes of every possible kind; but the more they increased in size, the more their productiveness diminished, and there remained only paper-money, which is the medicine of ruin. The circulation of bank-notes of the Reichsbank rose from less than two milliard marks in the middle of 1914 to 1295 milliard marks at the end of 1922. After January, 1923, *i.e.* after the occupation of the Ruhr, which struck Germany's economy to the heart, the circulation already amounted, at the end of February, to 3536 milliard marks. To what has it risen since? How much did it rise every day? No one can say. As many bank-notes as possible were printed. A dollar is worth 4·19 marks at par. At Berlin, on 27th July, 1914, when the war was on the point of breaking out, it was worth 4·16; but at the end of the war, immediately after the armistice, it was worth 7·35 marks. At the end of 1921 it was worth 184 marks, at the end of 1922 more than 8000 marks. During 1923 it rose to millions, then to tens of millions, then to hundreds of millions, and afterwards to many milliards, so that the mark had practically no appreciable value.

A distinguished economist has sent me from Berlin bank-notes of the Municipality for small sums, which, after being issued, were transformed into millions of marks merely by being stamped with a surcharge.

If the mark had been at par, not even Rockefeller or Ford would have been able to lunch or dine in Berlin, because many milliards would have been required to pay for two small meals.

The French Press, or the press which defends French interests abroad, maintained throughout the period from

1920 to 1922 that Germany was ruining her currency solely to avoid paying reparations. For a long time it even maintained that the depression of the coinage was very favourable to export trade, and that Germany was planning the ruin of every market, and was avoiding the payment of reparations, by depressing her currency. Nothing more stupid can be imagined. In many countries, not merely the industrial magnates, but even some Socialist leaders, expressed their sympathy for a policy of inflation. I remember the opposition with which my efforts to diminish the circulation in Italy were received. It was said that Germany was prospering precisely because she was not worrying about the state of her circulation!

An increase in circulation, in fact, produces in the first instance a feeling of prosperity, and allows many situations to be saved which otherwise would be solved only by bankruptcy. It also permits of an easier dissipation of the forces of the State and assists those parasite industries which, in many European countries, have such a large hold over the press.

Considerable hypocrisy was necessary to say that Germany was pleased with her circulation. Not only was all possibility of saving money destroyed, but the conditions of life were rendered uncertain and difficult. A man who saved 200,000 marks before the war (which was a respectable fortune for a middle-class family) found that he did not possess a sum of money sufficient to send a letter to relate his misery, or even to buy a newspaper.

Workmen contributed still further to the depression of the economic condition of the country by demanding index-prices, *i.e.* a means to prevent real wages from diminishing, generally by comparing values with the dollar. They were paid first of all in tens of marks per hour, then in hundreds, then in thousands, and finally in millions. Everyone knows what a terrible rise there was in prices. The same object might cost twice as much

in a shop one day as another. People went out from their houses to make purchases with the prices of the previous day in their minds, and found that prices were utterly different.

Thus all consumption was reduced to a frightful degree, all industry was disorganised, and all social life was flung into anarchy.

The consumption of meat in Prussia was reduced by a third between 1913 and 1921, the consumption of wheat by more than a quarter, while everything that Germany did not produce, and which had to be purchased abroad, was reduced to a fearful extent. Only exceptionally rich men could buy tea or coffee.

In 1919 and 1920 many Germans succeeded in selling marks abroad and in procuring increased values for some milliards of marks, especially in dollars, pounds sterling, florins, and pesetas. Even the most reliable bankers did not know what a mechanism of death the Treaty of Versailles was, or how its execution in a cynical spirit of violence and plunder was bound to bring, first of all the undoing of the vanquished, and then the ruin of the victors. Many people in Europe and America therefore bought marks in the hope that they would help in the reconstruction of Germany. A part of these sums helped the Germans to make foreign purchases and contributed largely to the reparations. Many Germans, however, conscious of the inevitable ruin of their currency, preferred to leave deposits abroad.

This foresight was the cause of a new press campaign, conducted by certain organs of the iron trade, which is a monument of hypocrisy and stupidity. To claim that thoughtful people who know that a foreign enemy is aiming at the complete ruin of their country should not send abroad, when they can, a part of their goods, is the height of hypocrisy. During the war, in almost all countries, the war-profiteers adopted this procedure very

widely, and for much more immoral objects. Perhaps those who foster the newspapers which pretend to be most scandalised are the very ones who adopted such measures most frequently.

Yet even in this matter there is much exaggeration, and Professor Cassel, of the University of Stockholm, who is one of the most competent of European economists, has reduced the controversy to its real terms. It is very difficult to estimate the amount of capital which may have emigrated from Germany; but the figures circulated among the public are entirely fantastic. It is very unfortunate that these problems are generally discussed by politicians ignorant of political economy and by jurists who, unfortunately, are often little more competent than many of the professional politicians. These persons imagine that the exodus of capital can be practised almost in abstract form. In reality, German industry, when working on foreign orders, preferred, when possible, to leave part of its credits abroad. But that was only possible to a small degree, not only because Germany's imports exceed her exports, but also because of the necessity of getting fresh supplies of raw materials. The idea that Germany as a nation has built up large assets abroad is therefore puerile.

It remains to consider what Germany has been able to draw from the sale of marks abroad. Now, many of those who bought marks when the fall had scarcely begun, preferred to buy property in Germany and, above all, shares in trading companies. But the assets which the Germans have obtained abroad in this way have not remained inactive. In view of the great difference between Germany's imports and exports, they have served, at least in part, to supply the deficiency. To assert that German industry has accumulated enormous capital abroad is a ridiculous notion, which ought to be relegated to the detestable collection of war-legends.

Almost all the big German industries are organised in the form of joint-stock companies. If these possessed large credits abroad, the fact would be revealed by a rise in the value of the shares. Now, if the value of the shares is expressed, not in paper marks, but in gold marks, one finds a general decrease.

If certain German private citizens have, when they have been able, built up credits abroad, the fact, taken as a whole, is not of great importance, and is a result of the dishonest policy of the Entente, which imposed upon Germany conditions so iniquitous as to deprive it of all hope of its reconstitution, unless it be by means of upheavals and revolutions. The Germans knew that their wealth would be used up by military occupations and requisitions. They therefore, when it was possible, took provision against plunder, and, at least to a small extent, defended themselves against robbery.

The greatest and most powerful mechanism in the economic life of Europe, the economic system of Germany, has been dismantled solely as a result of the Treaty of Versailles and of the policy of reparations; the foundations of production have been ruined, commerce overwhelmed, and the sources of wealth dried up.

Excessive reparations were demanded merely in order not to get them; riches were demanded and wealth was destroyed; a conflict was carried on, apparently for an economic end, but in reality for a political one—to disorganise Germany in order to obtain dominion in coal and iron, and thence the military hegemony of Europe.

8. *The fall of Germany and the end of her unity as the aim and result of the reparations policy.*—More than five years after the war, and after more than four years' application of the dishonest and rascally Treaty of Versailles, at least if so nefarious a pact had ever been honestly carried out, there ought to be at least a start in the direction of peace. A third of the territory was to

have been evacuated by now, and Germany ought to be in a relatively sound condition. Having become a democratic state, she ought to be on friendly terms with those countries of the Entente which, during the period of danger, declared that they were fighting for the principles of democracy, nationality, and self-determination of peoples.

On the other hand, the countries most responsible for the treaty, the United States, Great Britain, and France, have separated. America has withdrawn to a distance, and, although associated in the victory and in the so-called peace, does not wish to be associated in the errors and misdeeds. Great Britain, after the deplorable agitation which held sway between November, 1918, and January, 1919—an excitement which was not wholly British by origin—has now an honest and sincere desire for peace, but is isolated in this policy, and avoids every possible cause of conflict. France follows her policy of destruction in order to create a new imperialism—a policy initiated when Poincaré was President of the Republic, and brought to a culminating point when Poincaré was Prime Minister. It was under Poincaré that the Franco-Russian agreements to dismember Germany were made in 1917, and it was under him that they were chiefly applied in 1923. In this drama, in which the *dramatis personæ* are without number, the friends of the iron and steel trade surpass everyone. Militarism has found not only a reason for its existence, but also a vent for its ambitions. The great mass of the French nation follows without resistance, or with little resistance, because it has been poisoned by a propaganda of errors. It believes, or it believed, though soon it will no longer believe, that the German reparations would pay almost all France's debts, or at least a great part of them, and that, as the result of a policy of violence, not only would the French not have to pay new taxes, but that they would pay

fewer taxes than before the war. Even those who suffer most from France's fall from being a democratic country, dare not rebel too openly against what seems the great success of France as an imperial country.

If the economic measures have had no other object than the dissolution of Germany's economy, all the propaganda, all the movements of the army of occupation, all the work of the numerous agents (often invisible) has had no other object but the smashing of her political unity.

And what a policy! In the Rhine provinces, in Bavaria, in Baden, wherever a work of putrefaction and of disintegration was possible, revolts, separatist movements, and reactionary movements have been encouraged. In every nation there exist miserable wretches ready to sell their own country, either for money, or for the triumph of their passions. These human outcasts are most numerous after a defeat, during an upheaval, or in an economic crisis, especially in the middle-class.

The numerous prosecutions carried out in Bavaria have shown that French diplomatic agents, including even a French Minister, E. Dard, provided means for separatist movements. In these prosecutions, even people much more important than Dard have been mentioned. Nevertheless the French Minister in Bavaria, even after the prosecution of Leoprechting, who was condemned to imprisonment for life for being a French spy, even after the prosecution of Fuchs, who was condemned to twelve years' imprisonment for conspiring with France to secure the separation of Bavaria, continued to hold office and to work undisturbed at Munich from 16th July, 1920, onwards, and continues even now, according to unanimous testimony, to conduct the same experiments.

The programme traced by Hanotaux during the preparation of the armistice pact and of the peace-treaty continues to unfold itself in all its fulness—to annex the

left bank of the Rhine, to lower the position of Prussia, and to divide Germany into five or six states. It was necessary, declared Hanotaux, to make use of every possible means to attain these ends, and even to carry on propangada in Germany itself, a *propagande de liberté.* Of this propaganda of liberty—let us call it that, since Hanotaux so wishes—the French Minister in Bavaria, Dard, has been one of the most capable exponents.

To what has Germany been reduced by the policy of the French iron and steel trade?

Her coinage has been completely ruined, and all her output disorganised. There is no longer any security of life in Germany, now that she has been deprived of all her resources. I have before me a letter from one of the most prominent scientists of Bavaria, dated 24th September, 1923, in which he says that a pound of meat costs 50 million marks, that a workman is paid from ten to fifteen million marks an hour, and can no longer feed his family. Prices, moreover, rose enormously in October.

The intellectual classes are reduced to the most deplorable conditions, below that of the most ill-paid classes of workmen. Students try to get employment in factories, in mines, or anywhere else, in order to live. The most distinguished German scientists and scholars are in the most squalid misery. In many German cities, life has become intolerable, and security is entirely lacking, because famine and privation excite the worst passions. Meanwhile, unemployment becomes every day more threatening.

The object of the invasion of the Ruhr, said Von Rosenberg, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Reichstag on 9th August, 1923, was knowingly to provoke in Germany economic and political chaos. He spoke the truth, which admits of no attenuation, and which America and Great Britain must frankly recognise.

The careful research carried out by the New York

Institute of Economics, and completed in June, 1923, concluded by stating that there does not exist a more stupefying example of human illusionment than that concerned with the demand of the Allies (and practically of France alone, and of Belgium, which has become nationalist and a vassal state) for enormous sums as reparations, and of the simultaneous creation of customs-barriers, whose efficacy exists solely in preventing the accumulation of such sums. Taking as a basis the figures dealing with pre-war imports and exports, Germany would not be able to pay annually half that which the Ultimatum of London imposed upon her.

The Ultimatum of London was an act of condescension towards France, who claimed much more; and what the Institute of Economics says is true. But the demands in question are not merely a matter of the most stupefying example of human illusionment, they are also an example of a deliberate work of destruction, in the service of plutocratic interests and militaristic passions. The ignorant French lower middle-class is capable of illusionment and, in order to drag it to violence, it was necessary, and still is necessary, to deceive it. The authors of this deadly policy, however, knew perfectly well how to accomplish a work of destruction, and the sole illusion which they had was that such destruction could serve the greatness of their country, whereas nothing will inflict more harm upon prosperity, upon security, or upon the future of France.

The secret memorandum of Dariac ought to be read in America and Great Britain by all those who are interested in politics. The countries which signed the Treaty of Versailles would find in it enough to humiliate them at the profoundly dishonest acts which have been accomplished.

There are in Germany, with the approval of the treaty or without it, in a district inhabited by more than fifteen

million Germans, armies of occupation, which are employing every kind of moral torture, just as they have employed physical torture. There is no security, either of property or person. The shameful efforts in the Saar have their complement in the shameful efforts in the Ruhr, throughout the Rhineland, throughout Bavaria, and in Baden. Foreign agents are rekindling all the passions, and sometimes make use of any kind of delinquent to accomplish their work of ruin. Germany has an insufficiency of raw materials, and yet is obliged to supply them to the victors. She lacks bread, and yet must support the armies of occupation, which dissipate their supplies in an insolent manner. No one knows what Germany's boundaries are or will be. Forced to accord to all the victors "most-favoured-nation" treatment, there is no reciprocity for her; the bargain is one-sided, and she must furnish goods and money continually. The working classes are either goaded to strikes, when that injures their own country, or forced to labour under the threat of the prison and the bayonet, when that suits the purposes of the invaders. Personal liberty has been abolished throughout a large part of Germany's territory, and she does not even know what that territory will be. There is no possibility of producing, of saving money, or of carrying on trade. Submission would be equivalent to accepting an intolerable servitude because, according to Poincaré, the fifteen years' occupation has not yet begun; and every German, even those who had no responsibility for the war, and even those who are not yet born, would have to work like slaves for an indefinite number of years under the bayonets of the invaders, because it has been declared that they refused to pay. Resistance means increased disorder and ruin. Germany can neither resist nor submit. The peasants are against the workmen of the towns, the cities are against the villages. In the north, Bolshevism is

spreading; in the south, reaction is spreading. Separation of the various parts of the empire is looming up as a necessity of the revolution which is being brought about.

This was the exact programme of the French iron trade, the programme traced by Hanotaux and designed by Dariac, the dream which Poincaré and his colleagues wished to realise at all costs, and which, even though it leads to ruin, they will never succeed in realising permanently.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRAGEDY OF EUROPE

The Ruin of the European Economy, the Spirit of Reaction, and the Menace of New Wars in Europe as results of the French Reparations Policy

GERMANY, then, has fallen. Her economic life is in disorder, her social and political life in the most profound disorder. Struck to the heart of all her activities, paralysed in all her movements, outraged in all her feelings for a long time, unless things are changed she will waver between revolution and reaction, between separatism and national resistance.

At the Conference of London in February, 1920, when the illusion was still wide-spread that Austria, Germany, Italy, and France presented, from the economic point of view, phenomena of the same character, I spoke against all programmes of useless violence. It was easy, after victory, to make use of treaties in order to ruin the vanquished, but their ruin could only be achieved after that of the victors. When once economic solidarity had been broken, when once the magnificent machinery of European trade (*i.e.* of economic co-operation), the result of centuries of effort, had been destroyed, the ruin of all nations must inevitably be brought into view.

France, having invented the pretext of reparations, was ready to deprive Germany of all her resources. In order to pay the enormous reparations with whose immensity politicians had intoxicated the French people (so much so as to make them abandon those ideas of

democracy and justice which were their pride and salvation), there had to be at least a great economic effort. Shylock could demand the flesh of the Germans ounce by ounce, but there was now little left to take; and, from the economic point of view, the anti-German policy was nothing else than a prelude to the economic disaster of Europe.

For Germany to be able to pay reparations, it was above all necessary that she should greatly increase her output and her exports. Yet, owing to the effect of the armies of occupation, of the customs-barriers, and of the internal disorder of her circulation, Germany had to reduce her imports and witness a swift decline in her exports. Expressed in quantity, Germany's imports in 1922 were a small thing compared with those in 1913. During each month of 1913 she imported, on the average, 60·6 million quintals and exported 61·4. In 1922 these figures were reduced to 38·2 and 17·9 respectively—a real disaster for her export trade. It is calculated that in 1922 the value of her imports was reduced by 45 per cent., and that of her exports by 62 per cent. The situation got much worse in 1923. The programme of reparations therefore resulted in the disillusionment of its supporters, who would have considered that their work had failed, if, instead of having political aims of European domination, they had really had an economic programme.

Germany used to import from almost all countries, and used to export to almost all countries. Germany and Austria-Hungary, supported particularly by Holland and Switzerland, formed the centre of Europe's economy. Germany and the conquered peoples have no longer been able to sell, except to a slight extent, and have not even been able to buy.

Thus the crisis has grown more and more, even in distant countries which would have seemed to be quite unaffected by the fortunes of the war and of the peace.

Ignorant people, and these include many politicians who have an incurable forensic levity, could never foresee the disorder which has been brought about.

The victorious states, dividing the German merchant-fleet among themselves, had taken every measure to utilise their ships, in the conviction that there would be a rapid and almost overwhelming resumption of international trade. It was this illusion which made many ship-owners lose all the enormous profits which they had made during the war. Contrary to expectations, international trade declined on every hand; ships lay idly in the harbours, and shipbuilding had to be stopped. What foolish economic paradoxes! Germany, who had no money, was compelled to find it at whatever cost, in order to be able to trade and to pay for the freightage of those ships which had been taken from her and which had become useless.

Every military occupation of Germany, every act of violence towards the vanquished, destroyed considerably more wealth, and disorganised the world's life much more, than the most sanguinary battles of the war.

Mr. Baldwin, who is above all things a financier, showed in the House of Commons, on 2nd August, 1923, that the occupation of the Ruhr was a grave menace to the commerce of the whole world.

Even countries far distant from Europe began to suffer. India had made a good harvest of jute, silk and rice, but had lost her Central European market, and many of her products remained unused. The nitrates of Chile no longer went to Germany, but found no other market. Before the war, Germany bought grain from Canada, jute and tea from India, wool from Australia, etc. Those countries, with the money obtained from their sales, paid for the goods which they bought in British markets. The stagnation of commerce brings inevitably a lack of cargo, and this lack means a stoppage in ship-building. This

simple fact can be applied not merely to Germany, but to all the Austro-Hungarian countries, to Russia, and other countries. International commerce depends to a certain extent on the prosperity of all countries. There is nothing which gives such impetus to trade as a varied and abundant output. These elementary notions of political economy are well known to everyone, except sometimes to the men who take a leading part in the direction of European politics.

The world's output is now much less than it was in 1913. If we take such fundamental productions as corn, coal, iron, steel, meat, lead, zinc, and cotton, we find a great decrease. The convulsion of Central Europe has depressed all markets. The decrease is even being felt in the United States, even though more slowly than elsewhere, on account of the shortage of markets.

France has better conditions for an independent economic system than any other country of Europe, because her thin population, her wide territory, her good supply of agricultural resources and raw materials allow her, more easily than other countries, to isolate herself and to live on her productions.

Great Britain needs trade more than any other European country, because about half of her production depends upon foreign commerce. Britain's customers are impoverished, in that they have lost the markets of Central Europe and of Russia. In spite of great efforts, British export trade has far less importance than in 1913. The foreign trade of the United States, which increased enormously on account of the war, began to contract rapidly after 1920.

It can be said that the damage sustained by France by the devastation of her territories during the war was a small thing in comparison with the damage sustained by British commerce as a consequence of the war. The divergence of policy between France and Great Britain

since 1919 is due to the fact that the two peoples have not only different traditions, but different objects. In France many people believe, some of them sincerely, that the disorganisation of Germany, and the occupation of German territory for at least a generation, can give their country not only military primacy, but wealth also. France, in spite of the fall of her finances, believes that, by controlling Poland, Belgium, and Czecho-Slovakia, and by possessing the most essential raw materials, she can pursue a policy of domination and remain a proof of the possibility of dominion amid the general ruin of the Continent. There is in this a great illusion, which will necessarily come to an end. In France itself there are, in fact, two different currents of opinion. The section which controls the government, and, to a large extent, the press, includes in its ranks big manufacturers and war-profiteers. The adventure of the Ruhr was to these a big business undertaking, and reparations were merely a pretext. But there is also in France a more numerous host, democratic by tradition, which did not express its opinion, because it seriously believed that Germany would pay enormous reparations, and that the adventure of the Ruhr would re-establish French finances and guarantee the State's creditors. This public has been so much deceived, that every effort of Germany to pay the largest possible indemnity appeared always to be a trick; and therefore violence was the necessary consequence of error. In the end this current, when it has been disillusioned, will prevail; but it will perhaps be too late to repair the immense damage produced by intoxicated feelings.

Disillusionment will show itself first, not in France, but in Belgium, which, having abandoned neutrality and having based its financial policy on reparations, is rushing headlong towards ruin. Belgium, which has only nine million inhabitants, and is no larger than one of the

United States, such as Arizona, has more officers and men under arms than Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Holland, and Switzerland put together. It has more soldiers than Germany is allowed to have by the treaty, and many more than Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria together are allowed to have, but do not possess. Belgium, which is the most densely populated country of Europe, has for a century developed production of every kind with a view to international commerce. Before the war it had a foreign trade which surpassed that of Italy, a country which has a population almost five times larger than that of Belgium. In some of its industries, such as the glass industry, 95 per cent. of its output went abroad. In other industries, such as the zinc, hemp, steel, and match industries, considerably more than half, in fact more than two-thirds, went abroad. The manufacture of machinery, sugar, and paper, found its best customers outside the national boundaries. Germany indeed absorbed the greater part of Belgium's products. The fall of Germany and the Balkanisation of Europe, which has been shivered into a collection of states, some of which have no vitality, has dried up the springs of commerce and therefore of the industry of Belgium.

The damage inflicted on Belgium by the German armies was a small thing compared with the damage inflicted by the policy of reparations, in which the Belgian Government has always followed France. Thus Belgium after the war was largely responsible for the inevitable collapse of her exchanges and the inevitable fall of her industry and commerce.

The public has seen the damage inflicted by the war —houses shattered, factories dismantled, territories devastated, great dispersal of material and of energy, great destruction of human life. Even the most ignorant can sum up what all that represents, and what the ever-increasing burden of debts and taxes represents.

There are, however, few who realise that the destruction of wealth brought about by the war is, in its extent and its gravity, a much mightier and more terrible fact.

When one talks about destruction, the public always pictures something tangible—factories smashed by guns, houses destroyed by bombs.

Yet the most devastating action is that which leaves wealth unutilised, and disorders production. Depriving a factory of raw materials and of every possible market is equivalent to smashing it. If the output of a region loses 20 per cent. of its capacity because it cannot find raw materials, or because it cannot find a market, that is equivalent to the destruction of a fifth part of its powers. When the French iron trade claims the right to keep German factories idle, that is not much different from destroying it with guns and bombs.

The public foolishly imagines that the transference to Poland of the richest mining region of Upper Silesia, or the cession in perpetuity of the Saar coal to France, is merely a matter of changing hands. In reality these are economic acts comparable to physical destruction, in that they represent the devastation of economic organisations built up by long effort, and which were of the greatest utility in causing the most abundant output and the cheapest articles.

The creation of so many new frontiers, the disorganisation of the system of transport, and the destruction of economic organisations, destroyed or left unused large amounts of wealth for a period of time which it is impossible to estimate. Germany's ships, colonies, submarine-cables, and foreign credits were taken from her in order to ruin her commerce. The result was that her export trade collapsed, but that the commerce of her opponents also came to a standstill. Not only is it impossible to think seriously of reparations, but it is not even possible to resume the state of pre-war trade.

Germany and the Central European nations are not selling, but neither are they buying. That spells ruin for everyone. Every new customs-barrier, every act of plunder or violence, leaves unused new riches and new products. Such things do more than guns and aeroplane bombs did.

History will tell whether the peace of Europe, and more particularly the peace of Italy, has benefited by the destruction of Austria-Hungary (which included eleven different peoples), and the creation of four or five small Austria-Hungaries, each less united, more aggressive, and more insidious in their small but exaggerated nationalism. The Austro-Hungarian Empire had a population of fifty-four millions. Of these, only the Austrian Germans and the Hungarians have been classed as enemies. The other forty-one millions have been grouped into new states such as Czecho-Slovakia, or united to new states such as Poland, or allotted haphazard to such countries as Rumania and Jugoslavia. Merely by changing their name and by entering into the sphere of French politics, they have been transformed into friends of the Entente; and at times, during the session of various international conferences, I have witnessed the most comic spectacles, which have amused and yet pained me. Men of ancient German Austria and of noble chivalrous Hungary, who, during the war, had been exiled, imprisoned, or despatched to concentration-camps, presented themselves humbly, as beaten enemies; and, *vice versâ*, Austro-Hungarians who had served throughout the war now changed their names, called themselves Czechs, Poles, Jugoslavs, or Rumanians, took part in the Conference, and were included in the category of defenders of democracy, of justice, of self-determination of peoples, and of all those noble sentiments which were uttered during the war, which were still remembered as clever fictions during the compilation

of the peace-treaties, but which are now almost forgotten. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was the name of an actual fact. The people who composed it have not changed, and, since the war, have put on foot, notwithstanding their economic ruin, armies much more numerous than those of the old Austria-Hungary, and have frequently manifested more perverse desires and more perilous aspirations.

No one has demonstrated the immense damage due to post-war violence with greater precision than did the Swedish economist, G. Cassel, at a conference held at the London School of Economics on 21st June, 1923. This damage affects even the most distant peoples, those who did not take part in the war, and those who had no responsibility for the war, or for the peace which has been worse than the war.

In appearance, the act of violence committed by the French Government when it invaded the Ruhr concerned only France and Belgium. But the productions of the Ruhr, as has already been said, served Germany to make up for the deficit on her food-stuffs and her raw materials. Germany, therefore, cannot buy grain, rice, cotton, wool, or nitrates in America, Australia, or India. There is a further decline in the demand for freights, and a mass of productions which find no outlet. The countries which are affected by this cannot buy, whether in Britain, France, or Italy. The Ruhr used to consume large quantities of Swedish iron. That iron now finds no purchasers, and the Swedish workmen find themselves unemployed. For the same reason, and for others of the same kind, Great Britain has been suffering for a long time past from serious unemployment. France hopes to retire more and more into economic isolation; but even she, despite all her efforts, will in the end suffer by this state of affairs.

The material destruction caused by the war was

therefore small by comparison with that caused by post-war policies. The condition of the Saar, the Danzig corridor, the partition of Upper Silesia, and the military occupation of the right bank of the Rhine and of the Ruhr, are not merely deplorable political events, but are an economic injury to everyone, and frequently injure most those who have no responsibility for their conception. All the reparations that Belgium is able to get from Germany will never compensate for the economic damage (leaving out of account the loss of moral prestige) which is coming to her from being associated in the adventure of the Ruhr.

The international policy inaugurated by the peace-treaties is of most injurious character, since it smothers all activity, destroys the confidence of the producers in the future, and, above all, because it weakens more and more every day that wonderful instrument of economic life which we call credit. In the majority of countries, inflation has been greater since the war than during the war; the exchanges of most European countries, and of many countries outside Europe, tend to get worse rather than to improve; and there is almost everywhere a smaller inclination to save money, and therefore a greater depression of credit.

The economic life of modern civilisation is a most complicated piece of machinery; but there are not many who realise that the upsetting of this machinery only diminishes the working power of the world. The wealth lost during the war could only be replaced by giving a greater impetus to the machinery of production, and by raising working capacity to a maximum; whereas the peace-treaties and the so-called policy of reparations followed by France have resulted only in further and much greater devastation.

Unemployment is now very great in Germany and the vanquished countries; yet it is still serious in England,

notwithstanding the fact that it has been considerably reduced since 1921; and it is very serious even in those countries which seemed to have gained by the war, such as Sweden, Switzerland, and Holland.

The various inquiries on the subject of unemployment carried out by statistical offices, and particularly those of the *Bureau International du Travail* of the League of Nations, have revealed the spread of unemployment during recent years. Bankruptcies are increasing in all countries, output is declining, and markets are disordered. Unemployment brings with it everywhere an increase in sickness, crime, and mortality. The instability of the exchanges causes much trade-sickness, and a feeling of stability and security is lacking on every side.

The United States wished to shut their markets to a large extent against foreign competition, as they feared an invasion of articles from countries with a depressed currency. This, however, was a useless measure, since the export trade of Germany, who appeared the most dangerous rival, has been reduced to very small proportions. On the other hand, countries with a depressed currency can no longer buy from countries whose exchanges are high, and must therefore make every effort to produce the things most essential to life as far as possible within their own borders. The United States, meanwhile, faced with a small demand for products, have reduced immigration to a minimum, an act which has aggravated the conditions of many European countries which have plenty of workmen, but a scarcity of employment.

The chief sufferers from the present crisis in the world's economy are those which have little responsibility or none for the events which have taken place, including Italy. The war injured the foundations of Italy's economic system. Her foreign trade, her labour market, her emigration, the prosperity and low prices

due to trade between Great Britain, Italy, and the Black Sea, have been more upset than the French territories. Trade with Britain and the Black Sea, which assured low prices to Italy, has disappeared, and no one knows yet when it will come back again. About a third of Italy's exports, and about a third of her emigrants, used to go to Central Europe. The fall of Germany and the breaking-up of Austria-Hungary have therefore shaken Italy's national economy badly. In addition, the limitation placed on immigration by the United States, and the depression of the South American markets, have been new sources of depression.

But the worst point is that there are still many people in Europe convinced that the situation will improve if further riches of the vanquished are appropriated. In order to realise the state of moral decadence which follows economic decadence, and which in its turn causes it, one need only glance at a newspaper of any European state which has emerged from the war, and compare it with one of ten years earlier. One would find that everything has changed—words, sentiments, and conception of life.

In an encyclical full of moral beauty, Pope Benedict XV., shortly before he died, after having witnessed, to his distress, bad peace-treaties, which no one more than he, perhaps, saw from the beginning to be the cause of the greatest harm, drew attention to the deeply-rooted causes of the disruption of modern society. If the nations have suffered great economic losses, and if no one knows how or when they will be repaired, still greater are the losses due to a lower standard of morality in relations between nations.

After 1815, there was a general feeling of peace throughout Europe as a consequence of the Treaty of Vienna. The victorious sovereigns had done their best to find peace, and had never thought of the destruction of

beaten France. After the dishonest peace-treaties of 1919, there was a wholesale outbreak of violence. At first there was an outbreak of the most detestable forms of revolutionary Socialism in every part of Europe, and afterwards an outbreak of almost savage reaction. It was a matter of identical forms of dissolution—abandonment of the sense of authority, abnormal aversion to work, mistrust between men, excessive desire for pleasure considered as the supreme object of life, and, in short, a gross materialism which denied the realities of the spiritual principle of human life.

Since the excesses of Socialism in 1919 and 1920, a violent spirit of reaction has broken out almost everywhere in Europe. Not only are there many more men under arms than before the war, but there exists also, within each nation, greater hatred between the various social classes and contending parties. On the surface, there is now greater calm in the victorious states, because strikes are fewer or have even disappeared. That, however, is due to the fact that the great economic depression and the large amount of unemployment make every attempt at a strike dangerous for the workmen. Reaction is therefore strengthening its position on account of the surrounding misery. Laws and regulations for the limitation of liberty are being discussed almost everywhere. Protectionism of every kind is being brought forward, and archaic conceptions of commerce are again being honoured. Every now and then in the constitutional states a government is taken by assault by an armed minority, which claims to represent the ideals of war or authority, or the greatness of the nation. In some countries, as in Spain, the parliament has been practically abolished, violence has become a habit, and there are dictatorships *de facto* if not *de jure*. In Central Europe the restoration of the monarchies is being planned. In France itself, the nationalism which Poincaré extols is

dreaming of a legitimist monarchy; and, although he himself is a sincere Republican, his most enthusiastic admirers are not in the Republican ranks. A language which seemed to have been forgotten for a century or so is being spoken in Europe on almost every side.

This extremely dangerous state of things prevents not only the restoration of peace, but also the resumption of economic and moral relations. The European War came from the Balkans, and peace was made on Balkan standards; the Balkanisation of Europe is still going on. Large armies, a feverish search for new weapons of war, ideas of plundering the vanquished, mistrust between the very countries which won the victory, vague desires which are called nationalism, ill-defined longings for greatness which are awkwardly called imperialism—all this is bringing Europe to a lower level every day, not merely economically but also morally.

The causes of reaction in Europe are manifold. Some are legitimate, some are inevitable consequences of so vast and terrible a war; others, and the most numerous of all, have their origin in the peace, on account of the manner in which it was conceived, and the spirit in which it was formulated.

The workmen who remained in the factories during the war became accustomed to high wages, and often consumed on a large scale. After the war they felt the fascination of Bolshevism. Bolshevik Russia in its first stage appeared to the working classes not as a poor country reacting by means of communism and revolution against the immoral government of the Czars, against age-long oppression and a disastrous war, but as the realisation of all popular aspirations. There were big strikes and big illusions throughout Europe in 1919 and 1920. How difficult it was to govern in those years without producing a sanguinary reaction and without causing revolution to spread! I was then head of the Italian

Government, and heard many anxieties and feelings of alarm expressed at meetings of Prime Ministers. Some strikes, of exclusively or of predominantly political character, greatly excited the people, especially railway strikes, and strikes in the public services, docks, and mines, which were not always justified, and were sometimes unjust, and irritated public opinion. The reaction was therefore spontaneous. Nothing injures workmen more than using legitimate weapons for illegitimate ends, or making use of weapons of economic war, such as the strike, for political and subversive objects.

Deeper causes of reaction are to be found, however, in the policy of treaties which has been followed since 1919. France up to then had her plan to dominate the Continent. During the war it had always been said that that was the last big war, whereas nothing has been done since except to prepare for new wars. All the acts which were attributed to German intentions have been committed, but on a worse scale. Before the victory it was said that the war was being waged for the ideals of justice and right, and for the realisation of Wilson's Fourteen Points. Then, after the victory, people began to laugh at them. Clemenceau used to say in private conversation with a smile that Wilson had wanted to make four Commandments more than the Almighty. The very opposite to what Wilson had said was done. Thus, all the countries which were arbitrarily slung together are obliged, not merely for reasons of foreign policy, but owing to the very necessity of their internal politics, to maintain large armies. The division of Germany into two parts by means of the Danzig corridor, the allotment of German and Russian territory to Poland, the agent of France (who still helps to maintain the Polish army), are a source of permanent danger. Less than two-thirds of the population of Poland are Poles, and among them are four million Jews who are treated as foreigners.

Poland must therefore have an enormous army above her economic power. She must adopt a system of violence in order to be able to keep under her dominion—a dominion not always intelligent—men of a superior civilisation, such as the Germans. From a financial point of view, Poland may be considered as in a position not far short of bankruptcy. The Polish army has for some time been superior in numbers to the armies of the United States and Italy taken together. It is a foolish state of things, but Poland has the absurd task of oppressing Germany on the east, just as France oppresses her more violently on the west, and of separating the Russians from the Germans permanently. It is a deadly task, which threatens the very existence of the Polish nation—a nation which, if it does not feel the necessity of restoring what it has wrongfully taken, and does not put an end to the more extravagant absurdities, such as the Danzig corridor and the partition of Upper Silesia, will not find anyone to put the slightest trust in its future.

The Czechs are in a minority in Czecho-Slovakia, and disagree with the Slovaks themselves, in spite of the more or less valid conventions concluded between them in America during the war. In round figures, there are 6,300,000 Czechs, 3,400,000 Germans, 1,800,000 Slovaks, 1,000,000 Magyars, more than 450,000 Ruthenians, 100,000 Poles, and 200,000 of other nations, including Jews and Rumanians. There is an enormous diversity of races, religions, and aspirations. The Czechs are in a minority, and must, for reasons of internal defence, have a large army. The Czecho-Slovak army is now one of the largest armies in the world in proportion to the population of the country; for some time it was actually the largest. Czecho-Slovakia has to fear not only future conflicts with the Germans and the Hungarians, upon whom serious and unjustifiable wrong has been inflicted by arbitrarily allotting to the new state their best available

territories, but she must also fear internal strife between Czechs and Slovaks. Even the enormous army is a danger, because it reveals in a very crude manner the contentions between the various national groups. Some of the leaders of Czecho-Slovakia were, during the war and the peace negotiations, agents of France, who made use of them, and still makes use of them, for the more delicate secret missions. The recent military agreements between France and Czecho-Slovakia, especially those dealing with military aviation, are the complement of those made between France and Poland.

Rumania, Greece and Jugoslavia find themselves in similar conditions, even though they are less serious from the point of view of their population. Rumania can no longer pay her creditors; but she finds means to maintain an army whose sole object is to oppress the Hungarians, against whom all kinds of violence are used. As for Belgium, the war has made it militarist, and has accentuated the differences between Walloons and Flemings. All the sympathy that Belgium received was due to her being a neutral and democratic state. For almost a century the eyes of all the Liberals in the world were turned to Belgium, the field of so much democratic activity, the land of the most interesting social experiments. During the war, Belgium saved France. If the conflict had been between the Central Empires on the one hand, and Russia and France on the other, neither Great Britain nor Italy, nor still less the United States, would have entered the war. It was the violation of democratic, neutral Belgium, that induced the free nations to rise against Germany. The conduct of Belgium since the war will remain as an example of the moral aberration of a nation. At Paris during the preparation of the Treaty of Versailles, even Belgium wanted its little piece of territorial booty, and the area of Eupen and Malmédy was taken from the Germans and allotted

to the Belgians, even before they had asked for it. Belgium at once renounced her democracy and her neutrality. She formed a large army, divided herself internally between Flemings and Walloons, and the Walloon minority claimed the right to dominate the Flemish majority. Belgium, having lost her independence of action, followed France in all her acts of imperialism and violence, in unprofitable servitude, because she had nothing to gain from violence. She has been the only country which has dared to follow France into the Ruhr and to parody its arrogance. She, too, has had her military tribunals, and has violated that international law in the name of which she was saved. The life of even the happiest men has its hours of bitterness and its days of depression. Who, since Belgium has been to the Ruhr, will ever have sympathy for her? And who is there who will be able to take an interest in her future lot in any hour of danger? A Belgium which, after the war, had stood up, proud of its dignity, collected, democratic, and neutral, would have been the European centre of all the economic activities of the English and the Americans, Now, everyone distrusts it, and Belgium has lost, not only the confidence of the nations, but the sympathy and moral dignity which it achieved by the violence which it endured in 1914.

France continued her work of undoing Germany, which practically resolved itself into the fall of the European economy. Every day new wealth was destroyed, and new means of production, which represented the sustained effort of many generations, were left unused. She opposed herself to every reduction of armaments, and induced the states that depend on her, such as Belgium, Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, to take up arms also. At the Conference of Washington she adopted, on the question of submarines, an attitude which awoke considerable apprehension in America, and began to make the most benevo-

lent Americans doubt as to the real aims of French policy. At the Conference of Genoa, when a reduction of armaments was alluded to, and when Lloyd George, in the name of Great Britain, expressed his sympathy for the proposal, Barthou declared, in the name of the French delegation, that the discussion was not in order, and that he would withdraw if it were continued. Before writing these words, I re-read the text of Barthou's declaration. It could not have been conceived in a more decided or harsh tone.

The programme of France was clear and well-defined —to maintain a maximum of armaments by land, sea, and air, so that no one should be able to oppose the destruction of Germany.

Wagner makes Lohengrin prophesy to Henry the Fowler, that never in the most distant future should the hordes of the Orient be again victorious against Germany: "*Nach Deutschland sollen noch in fernsten Tagen des Ostens Horden siegreich nimmer ziehn!*" This time the hordes come from the east and from the west, and all are doing their best to carry out the work of destruction; but they are all, without knowing it, and without wishing it, preparing their own ruin.

Many in Europe, however, are alarmed, because they feel that the present violence can only finish in revolutions now, and in terrible wars in the future, unless some method of counteracting the evil is found. France is not satisfied with a large army, larger and more efficient than before the war, but is developing her submarines, and is expanding her air-force considerably. Against whom, if Germany has neither a military air-force nor submarines? Are not Great Britain and Italy friendly countries? Everyone in Europe feels a necessity for clearing up the objects of the French policy, since they do not concern Germany alone, but the life of the whole Continent and the peace of the world.

Imitation is contagious. When one arms, all arm, even states which have no need to do so. Feelings of generosity, like feelings of violence, are contagious. Naturalists tell us that use creates the organ. That is true; but when an organ exists, it must be used so as not to become atrophied. When armies are enlarged on every hand, they, too, must find an objective for their activities. Thus competitions in nationalism arise in every country, and there is an overflowing of nationalist sentiments. Where will Europe go? It is difficult to say, but it is easy to see that a spirit of reaction is moving in many countries in step with militarism.

Militarism, protectionism, anti-parliamentarism, reaction, and in many countries anti-Semitism, are synonyms. Europe is now being attacked by a protectionist wave, by the protectionism of the big states and the protectionism of the small states, which is exaggerated by high exchanges and by the collapse of communications; and the manufacturers of weapons of war, who are the owners of a large part of the European Press, urge it on.

Meanwhile, the universities of about half of the Continent are either not functioning, owing to lack of means, or are working in such impoverished circumstances that they cannot buy books abroad. Thus the commonwealth of thought and science is greatly restricted. All this disorder is closely linked with two facts, the reparations policy and the occupation of German territory.

Militarism is spreading the spirit of adventure and developing the spirit of violence, and these in their turn are arousing and maintaining militarism. Every old state and every new one, in view of the attitude of France, finds it necessary to possess that military force which is necessary to its preservation and development in the stormy period which we have to traverse. For this reason, even the most absurd forms of nationalism are welcomed in each European state, because it is held that the problems

of existence precede and surpass in importance the problems of liberty and development. On the other hand, since each of the old states is divided internally by contrasting interests and tendencies, and since every new state is divided by fierce nationalistic strife, they must, in order to realise military power, develop their armies, and give way to reaction. Liberal and constitutional forms of government are the least adapted to this policy. Parliaments are not always favourable, and therefore a fight is carried on against them by using violence and trying to discredit them.

A politician who before the war declared himself a sincere democrat received sympathy for that reason alone. Now, however, in not a few countries of Europe, such a statement would cause derision. Putting on one side all the detestable exaggerations of Socialism and all the detestable errors for which Socialists were responsible, every act of human solidarity, every intelligent social foresight, found general welcome and support before the war. The ideal was an ever-extending participation of the people in the life of the state, and the state's policy was directed more and more to the greatest good of the greatest number. Now parliaments are spoken of as toys of democracy, and tendencies towards solidarity as though they were archaic prejudices of the Social Democrats. People study less and less, and talk more and more. Even works of art and of literature are of frightful mediocrity, quite contrary to what took place in Europe in 1815.

Every Entente country which said during the war that it was fighting solely for the defence of democracy and the liberty of the peoples, now that it has emerged victorious from the war declares its military undertakings heroic, and extols them. At the same time, many people point out the danger and the wrong of democratic opinions. Now, the nameless masses, who died nobly, who submitted to every peril and every pain, were they not

composed of sons of the hard-working, democratic middle-classes, of peasants, of working men, and often of Socialists? Is it not true that the democratic nations have shown themselves capable of the most arduous resistance? If so many heroic acts have been accomplished by men brought up and disciplined to democratic conditions, is there not a risk of drying up the sources of national heroism by educating people in the principles of violence?

On the other hand, if there were before the war monarchies by divine right, as in Russia, they exist no more. One can understand the absence or the discrediting of parliaments, and the existence of reaction in countries where there is a monarchy by divine right. But what are dictatorships? What foundation can they have? And how can they exist for long without leading to fresh ruin?

The spirit of reaction which is passing over the continent of Europe, depends, in every country, on the international situation, and the international condition of Europe is dominated in every detail by the policy of France and by the policy of reparations, which, as we have seen, is nothing but a means to attain definite ends, which existed in embryo even before the war, which were crystallised during the war, and which have been strengthened since the war. In every country, therefore, the home policy is but the consequence of the foreign policy; and the foreign policy is, in each case, but the consequence of the policy of the treaties and of the reparations error.

I always upheld this theory and asserted it, at the cost of personal sacrifice, and in spite of all opposition, when I was at the head of the Italian Government. The same theory is now becoming the common property of all liberal-minded men, and needs no demonstration.

All the nations in Europe, therefore, are stirring, and all are arming themselves in different degrees. This fact alone constitutes in itself a reason for war. It is said that

nations arm themselves chiefly to avoid war, and in order to be able to defend themselves in case of unjust aggression. That is true, but it is also true that when a great army is built up, with large units and with powerful weapons of destruction, it cannot remain idle for long. A nation which realises that it has a military force much superior to that of other nations, begins to talk a different language. Even the politicians begin to speak differently, and are always more ready to see the wrongs than the rights of their adversaries. The crowd loves bravado, which it thinks is energy, and there are few statesmen aware of their responsibilities who know how to sacrifice a moment of great popularity to a duty dictated by political sagacity, all the more because mistakes in foreign policy are almost always overlooked before much time has elapsed. Violence is innate in the human mind, and the work of religion and education, which has become more and more diffused during the course of centuries, has not visibly softened man's primitive instincts of ferocity very much. The most intensive education did not prevent the German people from falling into its most fatal errors; the most distinguished scientists made the mistake, at the beginning of the war, of defending Germany's entry into the war and even the violation of Belgium. That was a very great error. French scientists and jurists have uttered no word of protest against the horrors committed by France, her iniquitous violation of treaties, or her daily breaches of international law. That is perhaps an even greater error. As we have seen, moreover, religion, or at least the dominating religions, opposed little resistance to the violence committed during the war. The banners of the armies who were rushing to destroy each other were blessed by priests of one and the same religion, and all sides turned to God to implore, not only their own safety, but also the destruction of their enemies.

In view of the acts of violence committed by the French in Germany when the invasion of the Ruhr had scarcely begun, the head of the Lutheran Church in Sweden, the Rev. Nathan Söderblom, made an appeal, which was signed by all the Swedish bishops in February, 1923, to the Christians of France and of all countries, to the statesmen, and especially to the President of the United States. The appeal was couched in high moral terms. Famine and the poison of bitterness, said Dr. Söderblom, were stirring the minds of outraged men, and physical and moral contagion were devastating men of noble minds in Central Europe, aggravating their misery, already fearful. As we sowed so we should reap. The reason for the disaster of Europe was evident. Brutal power and short-sighted selfishness were regarded as the supreme law, instead of listening to the voice of Christ. The whole question of peace and reparations ought to be taken from the sphere of threats to the higher platform of mutual confidence and good-will.

To see the state of mind of some people even in the highest classes of society, one need only read the reply to this appeal by Cardinal Dubois, Archbishop of Paris. It is nothing but a paraphrase of Poincaré's weekly discourses on the necessity of reparations!

Pope Benedict XV., notwithstanding his too brief pontificate, was one of the greatest Roman pontiffs of the last hundred years. When, during the war, he succeeded the pious and retiring Pope Pius X., his only thought was about peace. His noble words spoken during the war against the useless slaughter are true even now, several years later; only we now see that the slaughter was not only useless, but the herald of fresh slaughter. The Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri, too, has laboured ardently for peace; and I, as head of the Italian Government, had the opportunity to appreciate, not only the loftiness of his feelings, but also the nobility of his

policy. Yet all their strongest efforts were not able to produce a practical result during the war or after, because they appealed to sentiments and minds while brutality and plunder were reigning. Nevertheless, history will record with admiration, in this period of fallen civilisation, the names of Benedict XV. and his learned collaborator, who possesses to the highest degree learning and goodness. And, when the reign of violence has come to an end, and the memory of the craftsmen of death is despised, their memory will be justly venerated.

The spirit of violence is born from the existence of big fleets, big armies, and big weapons of destruction. The greatest wisdom after a victory consists in not abusing it. If a victorious country increases its armaments after a war, especially when the enemy has been conquered, it signifies the preparation of new wars.

If France after the war, when other countries were disarming and she no longer ran any risk, had not doubled her army and her weapons of war, a more moderate language would now be spoken. All nations have their ambitions, whether just or unjust, but they express them with greater or less violence, according to the possibility of translating them into action. When all the nations of Europe increase their armies, they also increase their ambitions. The explosion of all their ambitions creates that state of disorder which, aided by imperialistic dreams, threatens the ruin of all.

Great Britain after the war diminished her fleet, and enormously diminished her army; and by this fact alone she tends towards peace. Even at ordinary times, the greatest fleets exert less pressure on the conduct of governments than big armies do. Fleets have a very limited staff, which lives almost always far from big centres, and participates very little in the life of the country. Enormous armies, with their large bands of officers, by the fact that they reside on the soil and

generally in the big centres, finish by affecting the whole of political life, or at least the tone of politics. There are some countries of Europe, especially in the Balkans, in which the army makes the politics, and in which it has been impossible to avoid many adventures, solely on account of military pressure. The events which are taking place in Spain are a proof of what great harm militarism can effect. Crowds are almost always attracted by the spirit of adventure. They admire deeds of violence, and if afterwards they are injured by them and vilify them, it is with difficulty that they resist the temptation of committing acts of violence themselves.

There is a kind of pride in force which seduces even the most reasonable men.

The fact that Europe now has more men under arms than before the war is not in itself to be considered an economic or financial injury. Such injury, even though it may be considerable, is a small thing in comparison with the danger of new adventures and new wars. Treaties of peace, agreements, and guarantees are of no use. The one thing necessary if peace is desired, is to cut down armaments.

One should never tire of repeating that France, if she arms so formidably, constitutes a danger by the mere fact of her armaments. Why does she arm if Germany has destroyed all her armaments and cannot renew them because she has not the means of renewing them? It is ridiculous to say that an army of 700,000 men is required to keep Germany powerless within her boundaries, and that the feverish creation of a formidable air-force is required only against a German peril which does not exist. It may also be asserted that the French politicians have the best and most peaceful intentions, even though some of their proclamations are alarming. Yet the mere existence of her enormous armaments makes France a very great danger to civilisation.

What is the present military condition of the European countries?

The two most numerous armies in Europe are those of France and Russia. The latter, although it contains from 700,000 to 800,000 men, is not in a great state of military efficiency, owing to the shortage of technical material, the deficient technical instruction of its officers, the mediocre weapons at its command, and the condition of the Russian railways. It has been faced with the task of resisting attempts at reaction, which the Entente states unjustly assisted; it has been able, with the aid of the people, who did not desire a return to Czarism, to repel large armies like those of Wrangel; but its efficiency would be little off Russian soil, if it found itself face to face with an army much smaller in numbers, but with modern equipment. The Russian army in Poland in 1920 had no very difficult task, and yet it retired before the most mediocre resistance. The state of the factories and the condition of the transport do not allow Bolshevik Russia to carry on big military activities, outside its own territory. When the Bolsheviks declare that they want peace, and that their army has no other object but to resist aggression and to maintain internal peace, they speak the truth. This does not mean that the Russians do not wish to recover Bessarabia, or that, sooner or later, they cannot invade without difficulty the territory of the absurd Rumania of the treaties. It is difficult to say what would be the intentions of the Russians if they had the means of military aggression, because the Bolshevik Government is, above all, nationalist and Pan-Slavist, even though it denies it; but this inquiry into intentions is completely useless, at a time when facts are quite different. The Russian army, therefore, does not represent a great danger to Europe; and, owing to deficiences of artillery, of aviation, and, above all, to the reasons indicated, it cannot represent in any way a danger

such as to justify the enormous armaments of the victorious countries, or of the new countries on the Continent.

The only large European army, therefore, is that of France, not only on account of the enormous number of men who are included in it, and who have exceeded 800,000, but also on account of the vast weapons at its disposal and on account of its very up-to-date offensive weapons in artillery, tanks, and particularly aviation. If the United States had an army as large as that of France (which is supplemented also by those of Belgium and the vassal states), they would have to have under arms, in proportion to their population, considerably more than two million men, instead of less than 180,000. But if the United States maintained in time of peace an army of more than two million men, American life would be completely altered; it would even be impossible, after a short space of time, to possess a democratic policy. The need for adventures would be felt. There would soon be fervid men, who, for patriotic reasons no doubt, would wish, after some incident or other, to annex Mexico, and others who would want to annex Canada. Others would want to undertake still greater adventures, such as the subjection of Japan, and the conquest of Asia. Now there are in America only patriotic Americans, who see in everything only the future of their country, and who cling to those institutions which have contributed so much to the greatness of the nation. But if there were an army of two million men, an air-force of corresponding size, and a navy of equal importance to the army, many thousands of factories, and therefore several million men, would have to work merely for the army and for the navy. There would then be formed vast currents of interests, and colossal war profiteers would arise, who would stir up public opinion and excite it to perilous and foolish undertakings. It is difficult to say where sentiment ends and interest begins in war speculators;

but, in general, interest is clothed in the form of sentiment, and I have not found men of lower moral standard or of more shameful minds than the crowd of *nouveaux riches* who arose in every country after the war.

According to statements made by the French Government to the League of Nations on 30th June, 1922, there were at the beginning of the year in France 38,700 officers and 690,000 men. The budget for 1923 talks about 34,228 officers and 690,000 men. Before the war, Germany, although she had 67,000,000 inhabitants, and had to defend herself against the intentions, certainly not friendly ones, of Russia and France, never had so many officers and men under arms; and yet there now hangs around her neck the accusation of militarism, and of having desired and provoked the war by the enormous size of her army. After such revelations as have been made, it would be dishonest to maintain that the responsibility for the war was due to Germany more than to the others. What can be said, however, is that Germany would have been much more prudent, and would have laboured seriously for peace, if she had not had an unbridled confidence in her powerful army, and if the manufacturers of munitions and the big military contractors of the State had not subsidised or maintained a press distinguished by a disgusting nationalism.

Now the French army since the war, although it has become so enormous and has been endowed with all the weapons which experience of war has shown to be most suitable for destruction, has no one against her, because Germany, according to the Treaty of Versailles, can keep only 100,000 men under arms, for purposes of inland security, together with a very small and insignificant artillery; she is not allowed to have a military staff, or conscription, aeroplanes or tanks. All munition factories and war material of every kind have been destroyed, and the pretext of disarmament has been used to cover

the destruction of anything that had, or could have, any military value whatsoever, and of preventing war manufactures from being transformed into peace manufactures. Not only can Germany offer no resistance, but she cannot even check the violent deeds which are committed against her. The army of Belgium alone would be sufficient to prevent any resistance by Germany in her present condition.

What then does France propose?

The development of aviation has profoundly changed the military situation of Europe. In 1914, at the beginning of the war, both aeroplanes and submarines seemed to have very limited possibilities, yet both of them became factors of the utmost importance. The research which has been carried on with even greater vigour and ardour since the war (Lloyd George has justly asked, "Is it Peace?"), has opened out a much greater sphere to aviation, both in land warfare and maritime warfare. It is no longer a subsidiary factor, but a factor of decisive importance, which will undoubtedly become to a large extent the basis of future wars. Even if we reject the exaggerations of those military experts who see in aeroplanes and chemicals the surest weapons of destruction and victory, we must recognise that the basis of warfare has been profoundly altered.

The wars which the future is reserving for us, if the forces of peace are not able to prevent them, will be of frightful ferocity. It will not be a case of army against army, but of nation against nation. The whole civil population will be compelled to take part in the war, or at least to suffer the damage which it inflicts, without distinction of age, sex, or condition. All resources will have to be placed at the disposal of the war. Each of the belligerents will strain every nerve to destroy as completely as possible the population and the resources of the other. Marshal Foch, in his preface to a book by the

English Major Lefebvre, has clearly indicated the process of the industrialisation and the mechanical nature of the next war. Even the last war, in its final and most decisive phase, which overturned the principles in force when it began, had become more and more scientific, ruinous, and coldly and terribly logical. Yet even since 1918 a real revolution has been accomplished in the conception of warfare. Marshal Foch, therefore, in his introduction to Major Lefebvre's book, says that the intensive application of electricity, chemistry, and other sciences to the art of warfare, has caused the sudden rise of new and dominant factors, whose importance and whose danger to the peace of the world can only increase with the lapse of time. Technical and scientific initiative, the discovery of a chemical substance, the wireless control of aeroplanes, and other new applications of science to strategy, are capable of producing, in future warfare, formidable results in connection with the possibility of mass-production by peace industries, which can be easily transformed into war industries.

During the war all the best traditions were abandoned, and principles of international law which had always been respected were violated. The Solicitor-General of the United States, James M. Beck, asserted with sorrow that the furious war of extermination which had destroyed three hundred milliard dollars of treasure and slain thirty million men, was the twilight of civilisation. The hands of the dial of time had been put back (let us hope and pray that it may be only temporarily) by a thousand years. One could imagine what a war would be like when based on aeroplanes, submarines, and gas, a war against the whole population, and not merely against an army. It would mark the passing of civilisation.

The Dutch engineer, Fokker, the celebrated constructor of the Taube, asserted in a recent article that the enemy of to-morrow, to whatever nation he belongs, will make

no distinction between military forces and the non-combatant population. He will fight against the latter with the most powerful and most frightful weapons. The most noble-minded agreements made in time of peace will not prevent that from happening. Whole squadrons of aeroplanes will be sent to destroy the enemies' cities, even those farthest inland and farthest from the frontier, in order to terrify the population and to destroy the centres of production.

Chemistry supplies the means of striking more and more heavily, *i.e.* with destructive weapons whose power cannot be foreseen, while aviation provides the means of striking at ever greater distances, so as to leave no security in any part of the enemy's territory.

Aeroplane bombs and gas are a revolution in the art of war. Sir E. Thorpe has said that the gas attack on 25th April, 1915, was the most atrocious episode of the Great War, but it marked also the beginning of new and more cruel methods of destruction. Until that day, from the throwing of a stone to the hurling of a projectile, no method of warfare had been conceived except the employment of cutting weapons, or of penetrating projectiles, made by the hand of man and thrown from weapons provided with driving force. But since April, 1915, the use of gas has assumed such virulent force as makes it the most terrible and the most murderous of weapons.

Aerial weapons and chemical weapons have been associated in the work of destruction. The aeroplane, as Marshal Foch has stated, can transport greater and greater weights from day to day. It provides a method of scattering large quantities of venomous material by means of bombs which keep on increasing in power, so as to reach whole armies and to make whole districts uninhabitable. Chemical warfare finds in the aeroplane a weapon which can produce fearful results over the largest areas.

Devastated areas have hitherto been those which the enemy has been able to reach by means of his artillery and other destructive weapons. The theatre of war has been almost always a small part of a nation's territory. From now onwards the theatre of war will be whole countries. It will not be necessary to smash the enemy's lines in order to invade his territory. The work of destruction will be carried everywhere, even into the most distant lands.

It is useless to talk of humanity and of the duties of civilisation. Humanity consists in not making war and in not killing, and the duties of civilisation consist of working in favour of peace. When war has come, however, the one thing necessary is to conquer, and no one hesitates even before the most cruel acts, if they can contribute to the victory.

Every nation which goes to war in the future will try to strike all the enemy's centres of production rapidly, to destroy the great cities, and to produce the greatest possible amount of ruin. To possess the dominion of the air means to possess the dominion of the earth, and perhaps also to a large extent the dominion of the sea.

The chemical industries, and particularly the industries connected with colouring-materials, form the basis of production of all the gases used in war. For this reason France has been making every effort to include within her boundaries the German chemical industries, which are the best of their kind and the best organised, and to disorganise those which were left in Germany.

The new forms of war will bring victory only to those countries which possess great industrial activity, or which develop the chemical and mechanical industries widely. Whereas in previous wars, and even in the last war, endurance was a condition of success, rapidity is now announced as the decisive factor of victory.

To slay the enemy quickly, to destroy his capital and

his principal centres by means of explosive bombs and chemicals, to ruin swiftly his industrial centres, and to do so even before mobilisation allows his army to concentrate on the points of offence or of defence—that is the programme proposed by the new strategy. The air, therefore, where all roads are open, and where there is no need for roads to be held, will be the first and perhaps the decisive fighting-front.

Conventions and treaties are now in force forbidding the employment of chemical weapons in cities and in territories where there are large centres of population. But who respects conventions and treaties any longer? France, who reproved Germany for violating the neutrality of Belgium, *i.e.* for violating a treaty of 1839, has she not violated the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 day by day? It is easy to foresee that no one, in Europe's present state of moral degradation, would respect treaties, but that everyone would accuse the enemy of having violated them first. During the Washington Conference, General Pershing proposed the abolition of chemical warfare and the use of gas, and all present expressed their agreement. Yet, almost immediately afterwards, research for making chemical warfare more effective and more murderous was intensified. The most effective, most insidious, and most destructive gases are being sought more and more. Research is being conducted to discover the vapours most harmful to human organs and best calculated to destroy them. Irritant-gases, suffocating-gases, poison-gases, and corrosive-gases follow each other every day. Chemistry is now directing much of its activities not only to the alleviation of the misery and ills of mankind, but also to the production of them. Hyprites had already produced fearful effects during the war; but the gases recently discovered, particularly that discovered by Lewis in America, are much more murderous and insidious. The French scientist, Professor Martignon, who

is a specialist on the subject of explosives, has declared that French scientists have already classified more than a thousand poisonous gases, and has added that the possibilities of further progress are unlimited. Protection against gas, in spite of the efforts made by scientists, appears to be becoming more and more difficult when it is a matter of defending big cities and vast territories. It may even be said that such protection does not exist at the present time, and that a fleet of bombers can destroy the largest city in the world in a few hours, killing all its inhabitants. One can easily imagine what a war between France and Great Britain would be like, and in what situation the capitals and the large cities of the two countries would be placed. One can also imagine what could be done by an exasperated Germany in agreement with a revolutionary Russia. Perhaps these are facts which, fortunately, will never materialise, and yet it is very rash to think that the whole of Europe's life and civilisation are not profoundly threatened.

Simultaneously with the development of destructive gases of every kind, enormous progress has been made in the preparation of high explosives and in the construction of aeroplanes, which can transport explosive bombs of larger and larger size, and which are therefore infinitely more effective than those which were employed during the European War, even during 1918. Instead of bombs of a few pounds, bombs of 2000 lbs. can now be used without difficulty.

During an experiment carried out recently in America, a Handley-Page aeroplane, carrying one of these bombs, rose to a height of 4000 feet and dropped the bomb. The observers had taken the precaution of shutting themselves up in an armoured tower over 2000 yards away. They saw an immense column of earth rise, together with very dense smoke, and a few seconds later they heard the sound of the explosion. The bomb had

made a crater about twenty yards across and about six yards deep, and had disturbed about a thousand cubic yards of earth. One could imagine what would happen if similar bombs were dropped on cities, on munition factories, on arsenals, and on even the most powerful warships.

A veritable upheaval in the situation of island countries, and in the conception of naval power, has followed these successive and rapid steps in the progress of aviation, in the employment of gas and high explosives, and in the increased employment of submarines. Great Britain which, formerly, by maintaining a large fleet, had security on the seas and could easily revictual herself, now sees herself threatened by a situation which is entirely to her injury. As she cannot feed herself for more than two days in a week, she must possess security of commerce in order to live.

Warships at first had to defend themselves only from guns; then came the hidden danger of the torpedo; and finally, and worse still, the danger of attack by aeroplanes and bombs.

Many politicians and many writers have been seriously concerned at this situation, especially since the experiments made in America, and since the enormous and unjustifiable development of the French air-force.

Submarines and aeroplanes, although expensive, cost much less than big battleships; yet the torpedo of the submarine or the bomb of an aeroplane is sufficient to destroy the most powerful dreadnought.

Interesting experiments have been made in America as to the effect of aeroplane bombs on large ships. Particularly interesting experiments were carried out on 5th September, 1923, on the battleships *Virginia* and *New Jersey*, which were bombarded by aeroplanes belonging to the army and guided by military pilots. Thirteen 1800 lb. bombs were dropped from a height of

3000 feet. The greater part of them fell on the *Virginia*, which was shattered, fell to pieces, and sank.

The experiment on the *New Jersey* was conducted from a height of 10,000 feet. Few bombs hit the ship directly, but five of them, of 600 lb. each, fell near it, and caused it to sink.

Some of the bombarding aeroplanes had set out with their cargo of bombs from Langley Field, *i.e.* from a distance of 175 miles. Special warships of large tonnage and high speed are now constructed solely for transporting aeroplanes, and some of them can carry fifty aeroplanes.

It is easy to see that no naval power is now secure, and that a large fleet is no longer capable of keeping commerce secure or of guaranteeing the life of the inhabitants or their food supply. The German submarine campaign alone reduced Great Britain to hard straits during the war, especially during 1917; but there are now forces which the warships and the merchant ships have cause to fear in much graver measure.

Maritime power used to depend on the combination of a numerous and well-organised merchant fleet with a navy sufficiently strong to guarantee every security. This security no longer exists for Great Britain, unless she succeeds in obtaining an air-force to prevent all hostile action from France.

Thus, if Great Britain desires security, she must, even in the case of aviation, adopt the principle of the two-power standard; that is to say, she must have an air-fleet more powerful than the two greatest air-fleets of the Continent. As she has to revictual herself entirely from beyond the seas, this programme would not be one of provocation, but of defence.

General Groves, in his articles published in the *Times* in 1922, recognised that the strategic position of Great Britain was now such that the army and the navy would not be able to resist a powerful attack.

Lord Birkenhead, formerly Lord Chancellor in Mr. Lloyd George's Ministry, asked himself the question against whom the French air-force was being prepared; and, after having stated, in his speeches and interviews, that the enormous increase in the French air-force was justified by the German peril—a statement which is nothing but a romance—he asked what were the objects of the French air-force.

It is almost impossible to make a comparison between the military air-forces of the various countries of Europe. Civil aviation is considered, especially in France, as subsidiary to military aviation, and is encouraged by the State in every way. Again, the figures which are found in the various official publications cannot be compared very frequently, on account of the different meanings which are attached to the definition of aeroplane efficiency. The larger states sometimes have, in the case of each aeroplane entered on their list, another aeroplane and additional engines for use in emergency. The least wealthy states consider an aeroplane efficient if it is capable of flying, without troubling themselves too much about the enormous number of additional engines which intensified usage during war makes necessary.

The air-forces, therefore, which really exist, are everywhere smaller than in the imaginary figures published in the newspapers, especially in that part of the press which is in the hands of the war profiteers, who find in this field new material for making rapid profits, and therefore exaggerate the harm and increase the danger.

The greatest efforts are directed, not so much to increasing the number of aeroplanes (which the rapid rate at which material becomes obsolete advises to increase with prudence), as to the development of material of greater efficiency and power. Thus the greatest expenditure is perhaps not accounted for by the construction of apparatus, but by the staff, the running costs, the repairs, and the refitting.

In the middle of 1923 there were about 2500 aircraft available in France, of which half were in a state of efficiency, with an expenditure of 643,000,000 francs and an air-force of 31,000 men. Great Britain, without India, the Dominions, and Canada, had 392 available aircraft, of which half were efficient, with an expenditure of little more than £12,000,000 sterling, and a staff of a little less than 30,000 men.

All the other countries of Europe have a much smaller air-force. France has made air agreements with Czecho-Slovakia, and has helped Poland and Belgium. Poland has 130 efficient aeroplanes, Belgium 108, while Czecho-Slovakia has 120, and tends to increase them somewhat rapidly.

France alone has an air-army so formidable that it far surpasses the air-forces of all the other countries of Europe put together, both in number and in power. The French aerial programme for 1924 and 1925 contemplates a much larger development. Against whom are these forces directed? If France, who is not paying her debts to Great Britain and America, spends such enormous sums on her aviation and her army, what objects does she wish to attain?

The military efficiency of the French army, with its guns, tanks, machine-guns, gas, and weapons of war of every kind, represents a power superior to that of the three greatest armies of Europe put together. The number of men, which is almost equal to that of the Russian army, is supplemented by an infinitely greater organisation, and by much greater weapons of destruction.

According to approximate calculations, there are now in Europe more than 3,800,000 men under arms, and this at a time when the vanquished states are not allowed to have armies. In view of the diversity of exchanges, it is difficult to say how much is spent to maintain them. In 1913–1914, when most European exchanges were not

far from par, little more than 1400 million dollars were spent on them. Now, when almost all the states on the Continent are in ruins, and when many are living on ruin, *i.e.* on the inflation of paper-money, now, at a time when more than 80 million men, the vanquished, have practically no army, there are being spent, if we reduce the various currencies to a gold standard, about three milliard dollars; that is, about twice as much.

Now, an exhausted and convulsed Europe, which allots to military expenditure sums corresponding to three milliard dollars per annum, and which, after a war which was to end war, has more than 3,700,000 men under arms, which keeps its factories working to a large extent on works of destruction, and employs a million or so of men on that work, sees, by that fact alone, her difficulties increase every year, and new discords and new wars fomenting.

An Italian authority on military statistics, Colonel Zugaro, has published a series of articles on the various armies of Europe in 1913–14 and 1921–22. He has been able to examine, with the greatest possible precision, the absolute and relative changes in armaments with reference to area, population, expenditure, etc. Reading these articles, one sees what the military policy of France has been like, and what a fever of military activity has gripped the states which arose from the war.

Collating all the figures which it was possible to collect, with an enormous number of valuable facts, Colonel Zugaro arrives at the conclusion that the study of the differences between the size of the armies, together with the study of their intensity, shows that the greatest military intensity is concentrated in five European states —France, Poland, Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia, and Belgium. These are the states which, in one form or another, have a very active war policy. They constitute the phalanx of the French imperialistic policy.

If, therefore, France, which has a population almost

equal to that of Italy, and which, on account of the low birth-rate, will in ten years have a smaller population than Italy, spends, notwithstanding its enormous debts, the depression of its currency, the enormous deficit in its budget, and its big circulation, enormous sums on armaments, at a time when it stands in no danger from any state whatever, and yet keeps in a state of the highest efficiency army, submarines, and air-force, and tends to increase its air-force and to force its vassal states to increase their armies, it must have *objects which it hopes to realise soon*. What does France want?

France does what she likes with Germany. Her unjust occupations on the Rhine have been deplored by Great Britain, and no one has wished to be associated with the invasion of the Ruhr, except Belgium, who really has not an independent policy. France therefore did it alone. The Treaty of Versailles, if interpreted honestly, although it is the mechanism of ruin, does not authorise France in any of the deeds which she is now accomplishing in Germany; but France for some time past has not troubled much about the opinion of her allies.

The France of Poincaré and of the iron and steel interests—not the French nation, which frequently does not know the truth—has clear and well-defined objects ever since 1919, perhaps since 1917, and is pursuing them with great constancy. She wishes, by possessing the largest army and the largest air-force, to realise in a relatively brief period the following objects:

1. To provoke the complete economic and social ruin of Germany, by preventing and obstructing all productive force, and by making use of the pretext of reparations to throw Germany into internal disorder up to the point of smashing German unity and splitting Germany into five or six states.

2. Under the pretext of reparations and of non-fulfilment, to occupy for an indefinite period the territories

contemplated by the Treaty of Versailles, and also other territories, especially the Ruhr. As the occupation must not be considered to have begun yet, it must also be considered as of indefinite length, and, as Poincaré has said, the longer it lasts, the more the Germans will become accustomed to it. The *propagande de liberté* outlined by Hanotaux does the rest.

3. By occupying the Ruhr and annexing the Saar, France can count on the control of the coal and iron of the Continent, and thence on the military hegemony.

4. The military hegemony is now assured (*a*) by an economic constitution which allows France to witness even the ruin of her finances without troubling too much about it, since she can live almost entirely on her home products and possesses a sufficient, or more than sufficient, supply of foodstuffs, fertilisers, coal, iron, etc.; (*b*) by an air-force and weapons of chemical warfare which are the most powerful in the whole of Europe, and which even surpass those of all the rest of Europe; (*c*) by an army which is the largest and most efficient that there is on earth.

5. By impeding England's policy, which aims at peace and the reconstruction of the European nations not merely for reasons of sentiment, but also because of the necessity to ensure the trade which is essential to her existence. This gives France a free hand on the Continent, and she can thus acquire all the left bank of the Rhine, either directly or by means of a simulated autonomy, and can be sure of remaining for a long time, for a generation at least, in the Ruhr, until her programme has been realised.

6. To keep Poland in arms, as a constant threat to Russia, and in order to obtain thereby Russia's recognition of her pre-war and war debts and concessions of raw materials in compensation, and also (Barthou's request) financial control.

7. To keep alive a spirit of mistrust for Germany and Russia, and to arouse a military policy in the new states, especially Czecho-Slovakia, Jugoslavia, and Poland. All the states which received non-national territory by the treaties have joint interests in their preservation, and are therefore included within the policy of France, which, in most cases, amounts to military co-operation.

8. To keep Italy in isolation. This is most easily done by turning her attention as much as possible to the Adriatic, thus keeping her at conflict with the Slavs and preventing her from having any policy whatsoever on European questions, as happened in 1919, when, during the preparation of the Treaty of Versailles, the representatives of Italy, as everyone knows, were not only dumb, but also deaf, and took part as mere spectators. In order to keep her in this condition, nothing is more useful than to diffuse throughout Italy fear of Russia and mistrust of England, who, however, has never had interests contrary to those of Italy, and, in view of her position, can only have similar interests.

9. In order to develop this programme, it is above all things necessary to deny it. Poincaré, therefore, in all his innumerable speeches has always repeated the same things—that Germany was entirely responsible for the war, that France wanted nothing but reparation, that Germany's failure to pay was deliberate, that France would never abandon the territories which she held in pledge until she had been paid, and that there was no French citizen who aspired to possess the smallest fragment of foreign soil.

It is said that words were invented to express the thought, but also to conceal it; Poincaré has generally preferred to put them to the second use.

In spite of certain hesitations, this policy of hegemony, of destruction, and of dominion has never been interrupted by France. It must therefore be carried to its fatal

collapse. It is the policy of Napoleon I. dressed in modern clothes, and supplemented by three new facts—the creation of a large Poland, which divides the Russians from the Germans and threatens Germany from the east; the possession of superiority in a new arm, *i.e.* aviation and chemical warfare, which makes Britain's peace-policy more difficult, and in a certain way increases the power by diminishing the distance; finally, the possession within her sphere of influence of a series of states which are not indeed compelled, but interested in following her policy, *e.g.* Poland, Belgium, Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Jugoslavia.

The whole policy of France has a single starting-point and a single apparent justification—reparations. Not one of the men responsible for the French policy seriously believes in reparations; but it is solely by means of the reparations that armies of occupation can be maintained, armaments justified, and the policy of securing European dominion attempted. The reparations are therefore the great pretext, or rather the great crime, which is ruining Europe and poisoning the life of the world.

Will the programme of French hegemony ever succeed in transforming itself into facts?

I do not think so. It constitutes a grave danger to peace and civilisation; but, after a series of inevitable disillusionments, it must necessarily crash against facts and be shattered.

Its fundamental weakness is its lack of all moral ideals, and thence of all possibility of sympathy or of voluntary support. When Napoleon led his armies across Europe, committed acts of plunder and rapine, broke up countries and put adventurers of his own family at the head of them, he had with him a moral force of extraordinary potency. He crushed monarchies by divine right, and abolished feudalism wherever he could. Even the greatest thinkers of Germany, from Kant to Goethe, looked on

him without hatred, and sometimes even with sympathy. He had with him the men of the French Revolution, and seemed to the people to be a man who was translating the principles of liberty and of civil equality into facts by force. Many of his greatest reforms remain even to-day as wonderful monuments of a profoundly innovating mind. But the French armies which go forth to oppress, to suffocate Germany with a retinue of negroids, yellow men, and of negroes, what are they taking with them? For what moral idea do they stand? To despoil occupied territories, to imprison or butcher citizens who defend the honour of their country, is a sorrowful act, not a programme. At first there was great hostility towards Germany on the part of everyone; but now even the blindest can see that the reparations were a pretext, and that their real object was to smash Germany's unity, to ruin German industry, and to use those ruins to construct the pedestal of domination. Everyone remembered the crimes of the Germans during the war—the violation of Belgium, the murder of Miss Cavell, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the devastation of the French territories, etc. But now France and Belgium have committed on German soil acts of greater cruelty, more detestable violations of international law, and all this without the excitement of war, with meditated cruelty, coldly and methodically. All moral sympathy has not only come to an end, but has been replaced by suspicion and aversion; and these sentiments are spreading in proportion as the truth spreads. One cannot live very long on a pretext. Further, what moral idea justifies the violence of invaders? The affairs of the French iron and steel trade are not a confession of faith which can be propagated among the people.

The mistrust which rises from day to day places France in an unbreathable moral atmosphere. Belgium, oppressed by her militarism, by which, notwithstanding her small

population and her bad finances, she has an army of 113,000 men and 5348 officers—the United States have an army of 157,822 men and 16,654 officers—is becoming more and more divided every day by disputes between Flemings and Walloons, and every day is falling into economic ruin. Placed between Germany and France, with the enormous population of over 650 inhabitants per square mile, she can only be a country of trade and of peace. Yet she is carrying out a war-policy; she sees all her markets weakening, and, having lost the moral sympathy of the world, she gazes sorrowfully on the hatred which is gathering among all the Germanic peoples. Her most intelligent men are seriously concerned about the future; the aversion of the Belgian masses for the French policy of reparations is mounting more and more, while the very monarchy, which has survived the shipwreck of so many monarchies, finds itself in great difficulties.

Poland, which is the exponent of the French policy, is striving with foolish dreams of imperialism and with internal disorder. Her finances are a heap of ruins, and yet she maintains an army of 275,400 men and 17,377 officers, *i.e.* an army more numerous than any in Europe except those of France and Russia.

A secret agreement (now no longer secret) between France and Poland, puts part of the military expenditure of Poland on the shoulders of France. The Poles pass from violence to violence, from the crime of Upper Silesia, carried out with the complicity of the League of Nations, to the crime of Vilna, carried out with the complicity of the Conference of Ambassadors.

Yet the most intelligent Poles are seriously concerned. They feel that a Poland of from eighteen to twenty million people, without the Danzig corridor, without Upper Silesia, without Vilna, and without the absurd allotment of entirely Russian and German people, would

be much preferable. Germany will not die, and Russia will rise again. Can Poland resist the Germans and the Russians, and continue with her absurd task of keeping them apart? Either Poland will find the path of agreement, or she will disappear.

Rumania finds herself in no better plight, with the large pieces of Russian territory and the very large pieces of Hungarian territory which were allotted to her. There is no people in Europe more tenacious than the Hungarians, or which has a greater sense of national dignity. I still remember that, during the Rumanian occupation of Hungary, when scenes of plunder took place so disgusting as to make even savage people ashamed, we were all concerned, at the Conferences of Paris and London, with bringing to an end as soon as possible that occupation which humiliated Europe; and I still remember the rough words in which we all concurred in condemning Rumania. Yet she has continued in her error, pursuing every kind of violence in her new territories, especially against the Hungarians. She is obliged, therefore, although she is financially bankrupt and can no longer raise credit even by mortgaging her resources, to maintain an army of 165,000 men and of 11,380 officers; that is, a larger army than the United States, although she has a population of scarcely sixteen millions. Hungary will never abandon those of her territories which were unjustly given to Jugoslavia, Czecho-Slovakia, and Rumania, but she will always regard Rumania's action with special rancour. Now, when Russia has recovered her balance, what resistance will Rumania be able to oppose against her? All the agreements of the Little Entente, which lives in the shadow of France, are of very little value. Internal discontent is already blazing, and Rumania threatens to dissolve slowly in a flame of financial difficulties, militarism, and internal convulsions.

Jugoslavia offers greater resistance, and perhaps has

greater political independence, but even she is compelled to maintain an army of 144,000 men and 8133 officers, on account of her internal difficulties, which are due to the inclusion within her borders of people of very different nationalities, and to the militarist tendencies of old Serbia. Her financial difficulties are grave; but still more grave are the internal struggles between Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and the resistance offered by Hungarians who will not be assimilated.

The most paradoxical state is Czecho-Slovakia, which is an Austria-Hungary made more complicated by its authoritarian centralised government which claims to regulate the lot of different peoples by a single criterion. Whereas Austria-Hungary used to leave full autonomy to many nationalities, the Czechs in Czecho-Slovakia wish to dominate all the other nationalities, and try to denationalise them. In approximate figures, as we have already seen, the country contains about 6,300,000 Czechs, 3,400,000 Germans, 1,900,000 Slovaks, 1,000,000 Magyars, 450,000 Ruthenians, 100,000 Poles, and more than 200,000 of other nationalities, including a large number of Jews. Czecho-Slovakia and Poland are the two centres of the most intense French policy, and the Polish politicians, especially Benes, were, during the war and after the war, always the confidants of France and the invisible agents of French policy. Czecho-Slovakia is expanding its air-force, and has a military programme closely linked with that of France. The Czechs have an immense faith in their future and in their victory, ambitions towards the north and towards the south, designs upon Austria, and even the hope of a corridor to link their country with Jugoslavia, by occupying the four provinces of Mason, Sapron, Vas, and Zala, which are inhabitated by Magyars and Germans, but contain some Slav elements. Czechs and Jugoslavs would thus form a Slav rampart towards the south, to the great danger of

Italy. The Czecho-Slovak army, owing to its very composition, although it was for some time the largest in the world in proportion to the population of the country, has all the weaknesses of the old Austrian army when nationalistic contentions broke out in it. More than 40 per cent. of its officers are Germans. The officers and soldiers of Slovak and Hungarian races are not less hostile.

The condition of Greece, since her defeats in Asia Minor and the return of Turkey to Europe (a return which it was easy to foresee), has been made much worse owing to internal contentions.

Meanwhile, while Germany is oppressed, German Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria cannot forget their national aspirations, or accept the violence which they have endured, or the unjust appropriation of their territory.

Everything is uncertain in Europe, and the policy of France is based on very unstable elements, on a Belgium which will not remain militarist for long, on a Poland which is not succeeding in consolidating itself, on a Czecho-Slovakia which oscillates between dreams of dominion and internal difficulties, and on a Rumania which lives in trepidation and disorder.

The French policy, inspired by the principles of Napoleon, and based on an economic fact, has moreover two obstacles, which nothing can avert or overcome.

The first is the internal difficulty which the French democracy has to face. Even its exaltation of mind does not prevent it from seeing that France has lost the sympathy of almost the whole world. A nation cannot live for long on stories of German atrocity, especially when worse atrocities are being committed. On the other hand the great mass of the thrifty public has seriously believed in the reparations. It has believed, and still believes, that taxes will be lowered and debts paid by the reparations. Now, every fresh occupation in Germany, every fresh

piece of violence, may indeed help the iron trade, and increase the wealth of certain industrial groups which are well represented in politics and in the press, but they can never increase the payment of reparations. Thus it is easy to perceive that Germany will not be able to provide more than a very small quantity of treasure, and that France or Belgium, sooner or later, will have to pay for the cost of the armies of occupation themselves. The moral difficulty in which the French democracy finds itself will be increased by economic cares, by the necessity of new and very heavy taxes, and by the probable ruin of the exchanges. Many free voices are beginning to be heard, and they are not the voices of extremists, but the spontaneous expression of the middle-classes. France has an ever-decreasing birth-rate, too many colonies, too many pledges, and too many undertakings. There is a sense of discomfort, which is being manifested even by those who are most inclined to adventures. This state of mind will become worse when the truth is known about reparations.

There is in addition a second obstacle. Napoleon's effort to dominate the Continent crashed against two enemies, Great Britain and Russia, who were joined by the German people when they rose against violence. This situation is now exactly reproduced. Imperialist France has not been able to send her armies against Russia, but she has armed, supported, and instigated Poland, and has armed and supported against Bolshevik Russia the insurrectionist armies of Czarism, the armies of Koltchak, of Yudenitch, of Denikin, and of Wrangel. She alone recognised the forces of Wrangel, which wished to restore the shameful Czarist monarchy and absolutism, as the lawful government of Russia. Notwithstanding the formidable weapons at their disposal, the insurrectionist armies were soon repulsed. Poland has been able to defend herself, but is unable to take the offensive.

Russia will slowly re-establish herself, and will cut through the absurd division which separates her from Germany; she therefore cannot do otherwise than oppose the French plan of dominion.

Great Britain, after having been, together with America, the most important factor in the war, emerged from it without having solved any of those problems of security which urged her against Germany. From the day that Germany made the mistake of wishing to be at the same time the greatest military power and the greatest maritime power; from the day when von Bülow announced his plans of world politics, and Tirpitz raised the naval armaments to an alarming height, Great Britain saw her security in peril. When she entered the war, she possessed above all things the desire to defend the security of the seas and then to see Europe return to that economic solidarity which is the basis of all trade. On 25th March, 1919, Lloyd George, convinced that the acts of violence and the excessive demands made against Germany were not contributing to peace, presented to the Conference of Paris a memorial full of wisdom and moderation. The French Government replied with a memorial drawn up by Tardieu, which upheld the point of view of France. The French Government said that the suggestions of Lloyd George guaranteed to the maritime states, *i.e.* to Great Britain, the security of the seas, and, by the exclusion of Germany from foreign markets, the domination of the seas. Yet things have fallen out exactly contrary to what Tardieu had said. Germany has lost her markets, but neither Great Britain nor France has been able, or has known how, to take her place. Germany has ceded her fleet, but Great Britain has a large number of her ships lying unused in harbour for lack of freights. Never did Great Britain's commerce receive such injury as after the fall of Germany, and as a consequence of the policy of the disruption of Central Europe and of the primacy

of the Continent initiated by France; and never has Great Britain had less security. Once she had to think of defending herself against the ever-growing German navy. Yet the danger was not great, first of all because of the superiority of the British fleet, and, secondly, because France and Russia soon associated themselves with Great Britain in the defence of the seas against Germany. On the other hand, since the peace-treaties, France, with her submarines, and above all with her aviation and her war chemistry, represents a much greater real danger. The French air-force cannot have been built up to face a German peril. The assertion is too ridiculous to be taken seriously. It was built up solely to paralyse the policy of Great Britain.

The English, who at first were very slow to recognise the truth, have seen it clearly, after a large number of mistakes in foreign policy, both on the Continent and in the East. They will have to put themselves in such a condition as to fear no danger, and to follow, in their foreign policy, that secure line which alone constitutes the greatness of the British Empire. The British Press, which has so many honourable traditions, has unfortunately certain newspaper trusts which defend the errors of France and deny the French peril, with an animosity which does not often correspond with British interests. These newspapers disorder the public opinion, and, on not a few occasions, even recently, have not failed to obstruct the pacific policy of the British Government. This is just the contrary to what happens in France, where, in matters of foreign policy, all the principal organs of public opinion, of whatever origin they may be, or to whatever group they belong, pursue a policy which is often only too coherent in spite of its apparent differences.

Great Britain cannot isolate herself from Europe, and, however much she may think of strengthening her con-

nection with all parts of the Empire, she cannot do without European commerce, which, even if it is smaller than before the war, is still of considerable proportions.

The French and British policies are therefore contrary to each other. The latter must necessarily aim at the reconstruction of Europe, whereas the former aims at the dissolution and the domination of Europe.

The Anglo-Saxon race is often slow in coming to decisions, and, even if it has greater profoundity, it has not the agility or the adaptiveness of which the French are past-masters. But when Great Britain takes up a struggle she does not let go before she reaches the final victory. The modern English, like the ancient Romans, have the magnificent quality of looking forward, and receive victory without undue elation, and defeat without trepidation, as inevitable incidents in the realisation of their programme. The one thing necessary is to realise the programme. How many times, during the Napoleonic Empire, Great Britain was considered to be in ruins! Yet she never lost courage, followed always the same path, and did not stop until she reached Waterloo. Great Britain and France are now following two different paths. If they do not come to an understanding, a day will come sooner or later in which their paths will inevitably cross—a thing which would be a great disaster not only for the two peoples but for civilisation.

Italy, on account of the conditions of her existence, will have to be on the side of Great Britain sooner or later. The latter has been always the opponent of every kind of imperialism on the Continent, and for that reason, from the beginning of the nineteenth century until to-day, she has found herself at different times against France, against Russia, against Austria-Hungary, and against Germany. Italy must see that her greatest danger lies in the domination of the Continent by a single state, and especially by France. Italy has a small territory and

a large population. Geographically, her territory is scarcely three-fourths that of France, and long mountain chains reduce her agricultural territory to less than a half. Yet the two countries have almost the same population. Italy, with very few raw materials, without coal, without iron, without petroleum, without fertilisers, with a production which provides food for only five days in the week, and with a very extensive coast-line, is compelled to provide for her wants by labour and trade, and therefore needs liberty and peace. Great Britain's Mediterranean policy has been, and is, most favourable to the development of Italy. Three great states in particular, France, Italy and Great Britain, carry on commerce and navigation in the Mediterranean. To-morrow Russia will make a fourth. Great Britain is an ocean state, and looks on the Mediterranean only as a highway. She wants security, not dominion. France is only a Mediterranean state to a small extent, whereas Italy is entirely a Mediterranean state. Hence comes the difficulty of her revictualling, and her need for the greatest possible security in the Mediterranean. France, with a population which will soon be much less than that of Italy, has occupied the greater part of the Mediterranean, including Morocco, Algeria and Tunis. She has also vast aspirations in Asia Minor. Italy, although entirely a Mediterranean state, has only Libya, which, up to the present, has cost more than three million gold lire, and is far from giving any economic return. If, for the sake of argument, Great Britain were to withdraw from the Mediterranean, Italy would find herself alone, face to face with France—a situation which, in view of the imperialist tendencies of France, is not desirable. Italy's territory marches with the three most warlike peoples on the European continent—the French, the Germans, and the Slavs. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the peninsula was invaded time after time for more than thirteen centuries, because

Italy had not a single frontier like France, or the defence of the sea like Great Britain, but lay open to all comers. The word "Jugoslav" means "South Slav"; Jugoslavs and Czecho-Slovaks are the advanced guard of the Slavs towards the west and the south. Italy, having French, Germans, and Slavs at her gates, cannot be for long against any Continental people, nor can she bind herself for long to anyone. She must always wish that no one people shall possess the hegemony of the Continent and, for the sake of her future, for her salvation, and for her prosperity, she must desire the greatest possible freedom of trade, freedom of movement for men, and peace. In this her historical and economic necessities correspond admirably with the fundamental trend of British politics. Italy saw with profound aversion and growing anxiety the threat of German imperialism; but it was only a threat. All intelligent and thoughtful men in Italy now see with horror the figure of French imperialism, which is not a threat, but a serious attempt at realisation. It is true that there is often a confusion of ideas, a somewhat deliberate confusion, because those who do not dare to defend the French policy openly confine themselves to speaking ill of English egoism, although no one knows where that egoism is to be found, because Great Britain since the war has shown herself more ready than anyone to accept the greatest renunciations, although she had endured, and is still enduring, heavy losses.

Those European countries which were neutral during the war see nothing but their own injury in what is taking place, and strong currents of opinion and of interest are already making themselves felt, particularly in Holland and the Scandinavian countries, against the modern policy of France.

Can the French policy of dominating Europe through the medium of the policy of reparations possibly succeed? And even if it succeeds, after reducing Central Europe

to ruins, can it possibly last? I do not think so, because the political forces, and above all the moral forces, which are making themselves felt, can only make impossible the realisation, or the continuance, of a plan which is not only the negation of all principles of the liberty of nations, but is also the greatest possible menace to the prosperity of the world.

Meanwhile, enormous masses of wealth are being destroyed every day, and fresh hatred is being aroused. As a consequence of the French policy and of the reparations policy, Europe finds herself in a state of increasing economic disorder, and of ever-growing political reaction and misery. Almost all nations are falling into nationalistic conflicts, and every day wealth is being annihilated by the plunder of wealth. The problem of reparations hangs over European civilisation like a tragic threat. Born in equivocation, nourished in insincerity, and used as a weapon of strife and dominion, it is the basis of every error and of every misdeed. Either Europe will solve the problem and will terminate armies of occupation, military commissions, large armies, and the threats of air-forces and of chemical warfare, or else, after the fall of Central Europe, after fresh outbreaks of violence, after further attempts at imperialism, or after a series of revolutions and wars, we shall behold the complete ruin of almost all the countries of Europe, or a world crisis of which it is difficult to indicate the limits or foresee the extent.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW SITUATION AND THE NEW PERILS OF EUROPE

What will America do? The Future Programme

September, 1924.

BETWEEN November, 1918, and the end of 1924 the most powerful forces at work on the Continent acted in the direction of dissolution. We have had six years of mistakes, a six years' reign of force.

The countries of Southern Europe have fallen into disorder. The Iberian peninsula has not succeeded in freeing itself from internal struggles, but has rather aggravated them. Portugal has no longer any stable existence. Spain has undergone a *coup d'état*, for which the king was to a large extent responsible, and is now under a military regime, which, however, will not last.

Italy, also, towards the end of 1922, suffered an internal reaction under the form of Fascismo. An armed force took possession of the State and has *de facto* abolished the fundamentals of the constitution. The Italian Prime Minister and leader of the Fascisti declared from the first that, had he wished, he could have made the Parliamentary Chamber a barracks for his maniples, and has talked about the decayed carcase of liberty. On all important occasions he has declared himself an adversary of democracy. His followers love to call themselves nationalists and imperialists, although they have never yet said how they intend to make the empire, which is more a verbal expression than anything else. No opposition is tolerated in Italy. The leader of the Fascisti declares that he can use the opposition as fodder for his

troops. For some time past no real Parliament has existed in Italy, and no liberty of public meetings, or liberty of the press, or liberty of thought.

Greece is suffering from continual anarchy and has passed through every kind of change, none of which has lasted.

Turkey and the Balkan States are in disorder. Rumania is anxious about her future lot, being faced by Russia, who has not renounced her claims to Bessarabia, and has consolidated her internal position and strengthened her military forces. Poland, after having to a large extent failed to make use of the treasures of Upper Silesia, has increased her internal difficulties.

The Balkan States are in a state of flux. Czecho-Slovakia, although she has made some progress, is torn with internal dissensions which lead to violence. Belgium has renounced her neutrality, has armed herself, has entered into the French sphere of action, and has for a long time and without resistance followed the policy of Poincaré. But, finding her finances in disorder, her trade in difficulties, and her currency depressed, she has been constrained to reduce her armaments, not from any desire for peace, but from economic and financial necessity.

The troubles of neutral countries have increased rather than diminished.

The conquered countries accepted the treaties of peace only out of necessity; but they have not the least intention of living always in the condition which has been thrust upon them. Germany has endured the agony of hunger and moral humiliation. Her territory is still occupied by bands of spoilers of every kind. She has found it difficult to exist, and has been filled with bitterness; but she has held out, in the certainty that the present state of things cannot last. Austria and Hungary have absurd boundaries, in the permanency of which no one believes. These countries are not only not paying reparations, but have to be helped in order to live. Thus

has been realised the paradox that the victors have found themselves faced with the necessity of helping Austria and Hungary financially. Instead of obtaining payments towards the reparations they have had to lend help to the vanquished in order to avoid the collapse of these two countries and the spreading of the crisis. Germany's problem at bottom is not very different. In the hope of obtaining money and goods towards the payment of reparations, the necessity of putting German industry on its feet by means of loans has had to be faced.

Thus, after almost six years of the peace, the failure of the treaties has been revealed in all its tragic might. Where are we going? What will America do? What will Europe do?

Where are we going?

We are going towards everything that represents reaction from the bellicose ideas followed up to the present. The privations of both victor and vanquished, the fear of new and more terrible wars, and the failure of the system laid down by the treaties, have brought about a state of anxiety and alarm. A sense of security is lacking; it is therefore necessary to turn towards peace.

What will Europe do?

Europe does not yet dare to face the problem of her existence; but even if she does not yet show signs of repentance, she at least shows signs of a re-awakening; and a re-awakening is a step along the road towards truth and salvation. Until quite recently, militarism and reaction displayed an offensive air of security.

In the course of a year general elections have taken place in Great Britain, France, and Germany. In all three countries the forces of reaction felt sure of victory, and in Britain and France they had enormous financial resources at their disposal; and yet the parties which stand for democracy and peace have been victorious on every hand.

In Great Britain the Conservatives, whose newspapers, often against the wishes of their most prominent political leaders, regarded with a satisfaction which was not always justified the policy of France, have been beaten by the Liberals and the Labour Party; and a Labour Government with Liberal support has been made possible—a thing which a year or so ago would have seemed impossible. Perhaps the fall of the Conservatives has been hastened by their numerous mistakes, and above all by the need which the working classes feel for peace, and the necessity for putting an end to all adventures on the Continent. The fact that Ramsay MacDonald, a firm opponent of the war, has been called to the head of the Labour Government, has great importance and significance. During the war he was regarded on the Continent as a typical defeatist; and to-day, therefore, he is for this reason looked upon all the more as a sincere friend of peace.

The French elections have had an even more decisive result, in that the politicians and the parties who willed the outrages of Upper Silesia and of the Ruhr, the men most responsible for the policy of violence, the warmongers who wished to continue the war by using the peace treaties for their own ends, have been utterly defeated, and many of them have disappeared from political life for ever. The French nation, which has returned to its political senses, will undoubtedly return also to its democratic traditions. The reaction was especially due to the working classes, who were tired of violence. They realised that France, in spite of her many guns, aeroplanes, and submarines, and in spite of her many military alliances with countries which were in appearance free, but in reality vassals (more on account of their situation than by anyone's labours), had brought herself into isolation from the rest of the world.

The elections in Germany, even if they have given a

lift to the extremist parties, the Nationalists and the "Reds," *i.e.* to militarism and revolution, and even if they have given voice to the unrest of a tricked and harassed people, have, however, affirmed the Republican constitution of the country, and, above all else, the clearly expressed determination to surmount the present crisis and to recover the position to which Germany has a right as a free and democratic state.

These three elections mark three stages along the hard road which has to be travelled; but there are still only too many illusions and falsehoods to be dissipated before Europe can reconstitute herself as a living whole. The standards of reaction have fallen on every side. In Holland, in the Scandinavian countries, and even in Belgium, the forces of liberty are reasserting their power. When Italy is able to vote freely, and not merely according to the rules and methods of the Fascisti, she will show a reassertion of democracy even more significant than that of France and England.

The French people had its sad awakening towards the end of 1923, in the swift fall of its exchanges. Poincaré himself, who had announced and promised a reduction of the pre-war taxes, had to propose new and very heavy ones. Moreover, in order to check the fall of the French exchanges, it was necessary to obtain loans from American and British bankers; and, in order to obtain these, it was necessary to undertake political and financial engagements, in complete contradiction to the loudly-trumpeted imperialistic programme. France has had to examine facts at close quarters, and a knowledge of facts has even rekindled those feelings of generosity and democracy which had been obscured by newspapers partly controlled by war-profiteers and steel and iron interests.

Poincaré has not only had to accept the idea of entrusting to a Committee of Experts the preparation of a plan

for the payment of reparations, but has also had to accept the whole plan, thus completely contradicting all his assertions for the past five years.

The idea of dispensing with the Reparations Commission and of discussing a scheme of reparations that would be both possible and acceptable, directly with Germany's political representatives, dates back to the San Remo Conference, held in the spring of 1920. At that conference, Lloyd George and I found ourselves in agreement on a proposal to arrange a meeting with Germany's representatives in some Belgian city, and to decide, in a manner inspired by a sincere desire for peace, the question which is most fundamental to the life of Europe. The Spa Conference was thus decided upon. But, by a strange misfortune, which would perhaps be worthy of examination, the agitation which was being carried on against me in Italy was intensified at that very time, and I had to resign my position as Prime Minister. The Spa Conference accomplished nothing of importance, because Great Britain's efforts in the cause of peace were completely isolated, and thus four years have been wasted.

Later on, I pursued in the American Press the subject which had inspired our labours at San Remo, and proposed to entrust the task of formulating a reparations-scheme to a committee of experts, which was to include some Americans in its ranks. Mr. Hughes, American Secretary of State, in a speech delivered at Newhaven on 29th December, 1922, put forward similar proposals, which were evidently backed by authority. He proposed that the question of reparations should be examined by men possessed of high authority in financial matters in the respective countries concerned, and that they should be men of such experience and standing that their proposals and their plan would be received with complete confidence. If politicians could not come to an understanding,

said Mr. Hughes, clear-headed business-men could easily do so, since they were not compelled to obey political orders. They must confine their attention entirely to the economic side of the problem. Sentiment, although only natural, must not enter into it. Mutual recriminations were of no use. Criticisms of past events, whether true or false, led to nothing.

Almost two years after my proposal, and almost a year after the statements of Mr. Hughes, the Reparations Commission decided on 30th November, 1923, when the French exchange was already falling, to nominate the Committee of Experts. The Reparations Commission, by deciding on such nomination, annulled itself, because it practically recognised that up till then it had not acted as a technical committee, but as a political body. History will show what unabashed ignorance, what cynicism, and what dishonour was exemplified by the Reparations Commission throughout the whole of its discreditable existence.

The Committee of Experts, which was presided over by the American, General C. W. Dawes, and in which were included representatives of America, France, Britain, and Italy, presented its conclusions on 9th April, 1924. These conclusions are generally known, and constitute the so-called Dawes Plan.

The Committee of Experts, according to its statements, strove to base its plan on those principles of equity, right, and justice, which constitute the best and most comprehensive safeguard of world-peace. It did not aim at inflicting penalties, but at the economic rehabilitation of all nations, and at the inauguration of a new epoch of prosperity, free from the menace of war. It tried also, so it stated, not to impose upon Germany burdens more heavy than those which weighed upon the countries represented on the Committee.

It cannot be denied that the Committee of Experts

accomplished a work of great value. Its whole report was based on the hypothesis that Germany's economic unity must be re-established, and that Germany must therefore recover her internal and external credit. It was based on the assumption that not only must the Ruhr and the territories occupied in violation of the Treaty of Versailles be set free, but that the territories occupied in accordance with the treaty must also be set free at the appointed time.

According to the Committee of Experts, Germany, by taking up foreign loans, could pay 1000 million marks in the first year, 1220 millions in the second and third years, 1750 millions in the fourth, and 2500 millions in the fifth year, which could be regarded as the index-year indicating Germany's capacity for effective payment after she had emerged from her present crisis.

In addition, payments in kind would be continued. They would be of smaller dimensions in the first two years, and larger afterwards.

With these proposals as a basis, the Conference of London assembled in August, 1924, to deliberate on the Dawes Plan, and the Prime Ministers of Britain and France met, animated by a common desire for peace, and, above all, by a desire to accept the Dawes Plan.

Now what is this plan?

It is the negation of everything that has been done for five years. It is the most tragic negation of all the violence that has taken place. Is the French nation responsible for the errors which have been perpetrated if, when Poincaré was President of the Republic, Clemenceau Prime Minister, and Klotz Minister of Finance, it proclaimed, with cynical unconcern, an indemnity of 250 milliard gold marks? Is the French nation responsible for Poincaré's declaration that the reparations were to pay for the expenses of the liberated provinces and for war-pensions, and that it was also possible to main-

tain a big army and yet reduce the pre-war taxes? Is the French nation responsible if enormous sums have been included in the budget, and if it has allowed itself to believe, in all seriousness, and with every sign of certainty, that Germany could pay sums which far surpassed the whole of the pre-war budget of France?

When one considers, moreover, that the Germans, since the armistice, have been forced in every kind of way to pay, up to the present, considerably more than forty-six milliard gold marks, and that this large sum has been to a great extent squandered on foolish objects, on works of plunder, and on works of violence, one understands the reaction which has taken place in the minds of everyone. One understands how, in all countries, the educated classes are acquiring by disgust, and the working classes by instinct, a daily increasing aversion and a hatred for the policy of destruction which has been followed from the time the war ended until now. During this time, where the schemes of nationalists and militarists have not prevailed, ignorance has reigned.

The final protocol of the conference was signed at London on 16th August. The representatives of Germany took part in the ceremony, and took part also in the negotiations which preceded it. The event assumed even greater importance from the fact that it was separated by only a few days from the signing of the treaty between Britain and Russia.

The point which is most dangerous in the Dawes Plan, and which constitutes a menace to the future, is the long period of time which it covers. Problems like those of the reparations are solved well only when they are solved quickly. The Plan presupposes, even if it be only to a limited degree, a control such as no people tolerates for long. It presupposes revisions and corrections which cannot be carried out without exasperating. When the Dawes Plan comes up for its inevitable revision,

what will be the political condition of France? And for how long will the German workers resign themselves to the control of foreigners and to working for their conquerors? Does not every passing year aggravate discontent and cause hatred to ferment?

But, in any case, what is left of the policy of strife?

The Western capitalism which armed and paid the insurrectionist forces in Russia; the capitalism which went so far as to secure the French recognition of Wrangel's army as representing the lawful government of Russia; the capitalism which shuddered at Soviet Russia (though it had never shuddered at Czarist Russia); the capitalism which tried in vain to obtain financial concessions from the Bolshevik Government, has had to recognise the right of every nation to regulate its own internal life in the form it thinks best. Thus the programme of Poincaré and Clemenceau (war with Russia, and then a barbed-wire fence round Russia), the programme of Barthou (financial control of Russia) has fallen in the face of facts. Ramsay MacDonald deserves great credit for having smashed this policy of equivocation, even if the treaty with Russia has to meet the opposition of the British Parliament.

When the Dawes Plan was drawn up, there was a desire at London to save, not the dignity (in which no one could believe), but at least the temporary existence of the Reparations Commission. First, therefore, an agreement was signed between the Commission and the representatives of the German Government. The agreement was then signed by the representatives of all the nations interested in the reparations. A new and notable principle was introduced into the treaty by the stipulation that arbitration was to be used to settle any differences that might arise.

I do not think that the Dawes Plan can be realised, or at least completely realised, without causing great harm,

or without augmenting the causes of disorder which it was proposed to eliminate. The proof of this statement would lead me into a long technical discussion which readers might perhaps think somewhat tiresome.

There is, however, one observation to be made, which is sufficient in itself to arouse the gravest anxiety.

Italy and France, the former especially, emerged from the war in a state of exhaustion. France, as a result of the war, enlarged her borders by the inclusion of very wealthy provinces. She received a large supply of raw materials and the greater part of Germany's coal-fields. She enlarged her fleet, and still more her immense colonial empire, which was already the largest in the world. The same cannot be said about Italy, whose annexations of territory brought feelings of legitimate national satisfaction, but were of little economic value. She received no colonial acquisitions, nor any of the raw materials in which she is more deficient than any other large European country.

France and Italy owe debts to Britain and the United States. Up to the present they have been unable to pay either the capital or the interest. They hoped that the debts would be cancelled. They are now awaiting future and uncertain events. It may be regarded as a certainty that if France and Italy were compelled to pay no more than a milliard gold francs per annum towards the payment of the interest on their debts, they would be faced with the complete ruin of their exchanges.

Great Britain has, in France and Italy, tardy and, to a great extent, insolvent debtors; but she herself is indebted to the United States, and has resolved to put that debt in order. After the war, in spite of the enormous losses which her commerce had sustained, she found herself in an advantageous position. Her merchant fleet has become even larger, her coal-trade has met with less competition, and she has been able to trade with many

parts of the world which Germany had abandoned. Further, she has been able to enlarge even wider the boundaries of her dominions and her colonies.

Contrary to France, Great Britain, who had never attached excessive importance to reparations, has pursued a very courageous monetary policy. She has imposed upon herself the sternest sacrifices; she has raised her taxes higher and higher; and, even if she has not brought her exchange to par, she has kept it at a high level at a time when the exchanges of France, Italy and Belgium were falling headlong.

Great Britain has also made every effort to pay off her debt to America. As it was impossible to accomplish that in a few years, on 18th January, 1923, she made an agreement with the American Government, which was afterwards approved by the Senate, in accordance with which the repayment of the debt and of the interest on it was spread over a period of sixty-two years, from 1923 to 1984. For the first two years she will pay twenty-three million sterling, after which the annual payments will rise gradually, until the maximum of £175,000,000 is reached in 1983 and 1984. Now can Germany, in her present state of depression, pay more than Britain can now pay, and more than she will be able to pay for twenty years?

The ingenuity and good faith of the Dawes Plan are beyond doubt, but it is doubtful whether it can be executed; but in any case the Plan has been accepted, even though it has met with considerable opposition in the Reichstag and in the parliaments of the leading countries of the Entente. We are living in sunny days by comparison with the stupidity and the aberrations hitherto displayed by what was the Entente.

The Dawes Plan, moreover, assumed the immediate reconstitution of Germany's economic unity, and, before all else, the entire and immediate liberation of the Ruhr.

France has not even consented to that—certainly not for military reasons, but because the iron and steel magnates wish to reap further and greater commercial advantages by delaying the evacuation.

The Conference of London was followed after a short interval by the Conference of Geneva, where MacDonald, Herriot, and the principal heads of governments wished to participate in person in the fifth assembly of the League of Nations. The chief subjects of discussion were disarmament, arbitration, and pacts of guarantee against whoever might disturb the peace. Very noble speeches were delivered, but the results arrived at were much less valuable. Everyone made an effort to show, almost to affect, a security and a confidence which existed, however, only on the surface. Even the most responsible leaders avoided concerning themselves, outside generic speeches, with everything connected with the real essentials of peace. A confidence, too, which no one possesses, was exhibited in the state of things created by the treaties. The official publications of the League of Nations are full of "applause," "loud applause," "prolonged applause," "renewed applause." They remind me of similar ovations and similar demonstrations which were evoked by even more important speeches after the armistice and after the Treaty of Versailles. I am afraid that they will give place to the same delusions. There have been too many words; there has been too little precision of ideas, and, above all, too little determination to tackle the real difficulties that lie in the way of peace.

The points of view of Britain and France were quite different at Geneva. Britain wished to bring about a reduction of armaments by means of arbitration. France was concerned, before everything else, with establishing official guarantees for the maintenance of the situation created by the treaties.

According to MacDonald, the only way to arrive at

a correct valuation of the responsibility for any act of aggression is to resort to arbitration, and to set up a court of justice for that purpose. One must choose, he said, between arbitration and a race for armaments.

According to Herriot, arbitration is necessary, but is not sufficient. It is a means, not an end; there are three solutions to the problem — arbitration, security, and disarmament. Herriot wished to recall the words of Pascal: "Justice without force is impotent, force without justice is tyranny." But who could say where justice is to be found? Who could say that force has been employed in the service of justice since 1919? Arbitration, security, and disarmament are the three columns of the temple which must be built. Herriot made some reservations about the immediate admission of Germany to the League of Nations, and some less explicit reservations about Russia. Finally, a resolution was passed which was equivalent to referring the matter back. With a view to *concilier les divergences entre certains points de vue exposés*, the League of Nations was charged with the convocation of an international conference on disarmament. Meanwhile, two commissions will study the more important questions. The Third Commission will study the project of mutual assistance. The First Commission will study the question as to whether it is possible to amend the articles of the pact of the League of Nations relating to the regulation of disputes, particularly Article 36. No commission, however, was charged with the study of the most essential question, *i.e.* whether a lasting peace is possible under the present treaties, and whether the present treaties can be maintained.

It cannot be said that the Geneva Conference has not provided an encouraging spectacle, after so much stolid imperialistic and nationalistic strife. Nothing is more pleasing than to hear Herriot, head of the government of the country which has made most wars in Europe,

declare: "*Nous nous éloignons de ces siècles où la guerre fut la seule raison de vivre.*" Nothing is more engaging than to hear MacDonald, head of the government of the greatest empire in the world, in which war has been a tradition for centuries, and has hardly ever been interrupted for long, assert the noblest principles of peace.

But the Geneva Conference finished without accomplishing anything more than the deferment to another conference of the question of a reduction in armaments—a conference rather superfluous and wisely rhetorical, in that the reduction has already commenced, on account of the almost bankrupt condition of the greater part of the European states, and which will continue, because no one bears up under the weight of a military system.

Great Britain and France also manifested, in the solemn words of their representatives, very different ideas on the questions of responsibility for the war, of relations with Germany and Russia, and on the proposed pact of mutual guarantee, which was postponed to an unfixed date. Not a word was said about debts to America, and yet all were in agreement in expressing the desire that the United States would soon join the League of Nations—a desire which, as it happens, is by no means manifest in the Washington Senate, and still less in American public opinion.

Among the many speeches made at Geneva, and which would be sufficient to form a volume of moral precepts and rules of political life fit to stand beside those of Confucius, there was an unconsciously ironical observation by Sir Matthew Carlton, the representative of Australia. He stated that when the League of Nations set itself to work, the question which interested the public most was that of disarmament and peace. To-day, however, Europe has at least a million more men under arms than in 1913—a fact which, added Sir Matthew, has aroused a certain amount of doubt as to the efficacy of the League.

The doubts are indeed fully justified.

While the spirit which animated the Geneva Conference represents the negation of the work of Poincaré and of all the reactionary elements in Europe, yet the deadlock continues, and will continue, on account of that spirit which was manifested even at Geneva—the spirit of insincerity, which is making relationships between European states more and more difficult.

The tendency which is showing itself, and which showed itself clearly at Geneva, is to consolidate the present state of things—a state of things which is absurd and impermanent. Whereas at first it found its guarantee in over-costly armaments, now that the economic crisis has made itself felt, it would like to find its support in pacts of mutual guarantee. The victors, having committed an incalculable number of errors by means of the treaties, and still more by an unjust application of those treaties, would now like to consolidate and crystallise their position by a reciprocal pledge to prevent all changes. That would be one more exercise in violence, at a cheap rate—a guarantee for all wrongs committed, at a minimum of expenditure.

The pact of guarantee, if it were approved, would result in making despotism a permanency.

One well understands how the victorious countries say: "Do not let us talk about what has taken place. The vanquished have declared themselves responsible for the war, and will have to pay indemnities, even though they be much smaller than we anticipated. Even if mistakes and acts of violence have been committed, it is not possible that acts of vengeance can disturb the peace, even though there are grounds for them." The treaties, Herriot has said, are not for discussion; the task of the League of Nations is only to apply them.

It is, however, easy to understand that the vanquished cannot resign themselves to this cynical speech, and they

will say in their turn: "We must speak of that which has taken place. We must also discuss the question of war-responsibility. Consent given by force is of no value. The most outstanding acts of injustice and acts of violence must be atoned for, and that which is most immoral in the treaties, and which is most at variance with Wilson's proposals, which were to be the foundation of a real peace, must be revised."

The two points of view are thus singularly opposed to each other, and there will never be peace so long as the misunderstanding lasts. We can only enter into a new period of illusions and insincerity; a period, however, of more moderate character than the period of violence which it follows, by reason of the ideas of greater wisdom which have been disseminated, and also by reason of the anxiety which is felt about the crisis that has arisen.

The treaty of mutual guarantee proposed and discussed at such length in the press is therefore not only an error but a new and much graver danger.

It is, in fact, based on the assumption that it is possible for all parties to guarantee, by force of arms, things which exist as a result of the treaties.

Many things which exist, cannot, however, be defended for long. They must finish, and we want them to finish, even if their termination costs new sacrifices.

The dismemberment of Germany has been carried out without the exercise of any judgment, and with the sole object of destroying her unity. Germany is the only country in the world which is divided into two parts, and the Danzig corridor is the greatest moral absurdity to be found in history. It is not possible for Danzig, which is entirely German, to be taken from Germany to suit Poland; and it is not possible for Germany to be so divided. Must all countries agree to perpetuate this absurdity?

Upper Silesia has been divided, contrary to the treaty,

contrary to the referendum, and in spite of the opposition of Great Britain. When the Germans are able to avenge themselves for this act, must all countries rush to the defence of Poland? And if the United States were to commit the mistake of entering into the League of Nations, must they send their soldiers to defend an act which almost all Americans consider unlawful, and all regard as immoral?

Poland is holding Galicia by main force, although it has only a minority of Poles among its inhabitants. When the inhabitants of Galicia rise (which will happen sooner or later) and ask help from Russia, will British, American, and Italian soldiers have to defend Poland and march against Russia?

Russia has never accepted the Riga boundary or the loss of Bessarabia. When she has set herself free from her internal difficulties and wishes to recover her former territories, shall we send our soldiers against Russia? And shall we transform ourselves into defenders of Rumania's territory against Hungary and against Russia?

Heroic Hungary has been needlessly mutilated, and her people have been divided haphazard between Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania, and Jugoslavia. There is not a man in Hungary, rich or poor, Conservative or Socialist, from the archbishop of Budapest to the most humble peasant, who accepts what has taken place. The present Hungary is nothing but a geographical and political absurdity, and those who willed thus to mutilate it are ashamed of their work, and each of them attributes the responsibility to the others. A Hungary reduced to less than eight million people, with a capital of almost a million, cannot live, and moreover, is determined not to live so reduced and so tormented. When Hungary has the power and the will to set herself free from her servitude, must English troops take up the task of defending the *status quo*?

Austria is an absurdity no less grave. How can it survive, reduced to its present dimensions? With a capital of little less than two millions, and a total population of little more than six millions and a half, it needs help, and is suffocating in its unjust confines. A hypocritical stipulation in the Treaty of Versailles *forbids* it to unite with Germany; *i.e.* it prevents a German people from uniting of its own free will with other German peoples. If to-morrow Austria decides to break this iniquitous bond (camouflaged as protection), must the soldiers of free countries like England intervene in the defence of tyranny?

How can the illusion exist that America will take up the burden of these absurdities? And how can anyone believe in a cheap peace based on injustice? Why should the United States, without being urged by any necessity, take up the burden of all the discords of Europe, and accept the possibility of unjust wars outside their own territory? Why should they appoint themselves policemen of peace-treaties which the Senate in its wisdom refused to ratify, and which the public conscience has rejected?

The reduction of armaments in Europe is, before all else, an economic necessity; it is the result of the European crisis. It is, moreover, a matter of morality. All are tired of ten years of violence. Yet the idea of obtaining peace without systematising the reparations, without ending the armies of occupation, and without revising the more serious injustices of the treaties, is simply absurd. The Conferences of London and Geneva are merely two efforts to return to our senses after a bad drinking-bout, but we are still waiting for words which will urge us to action.

Great Britain and the United States can do valuable work in the cause of peace according to the attitude which they adopt, and from now onwards every speech

on the subject of peace must be stripped of the rhetorical phrases and the falsehood which still exist.

Everyone in Europe is now asking what America will do.

America is in a powerful position, such as she never had before in her history. Having nothing to fear from anyone, whether from a military or from an economic point of view, she has the power to speak the word of peace and, when it is necessary, to impose her desire for peace without any risk to herself.

Economically, the United States can, if the necessities of conflict make it incumbent upon them, do without Europe, and without almost all the other continents, if only they limit their production and increase their consumption. Their production of agricultural produce and of raw materials, such as grain, coal, meat, cotton, iron, petroleum, and fertilisers, is so vast that it far exceeds the demands of the country's internal trade. The problems of international commerce are therefore regarded from the point of view of development, not from that of existence, as is the case in Great Britain, Germany and Italy. America at war can isolate herself and have nothing to fear economically.

She has nothing to fear from a military standpoint either. Bounded by two oceans, by Canada and Mexico, there is no possibility of her being invaded. The new forms of warfare, such as submarines, aeroplanes, and chemical weapons of destruction, have enormously increased her power without an effort. When war was based on vast numbers of men and guns, the lack of a big standing army might have been for America a relative weakness, even though she showed, during the last war, that a well-organised democratic country can form an army rapidly. Aviation and chemical warfare, however, give America an easy superiority. Given the raw materials, the industrial organisation, and the rapidity of her manufacturing processes, America, by maintain-

ing in time of peace only a small army (which is, and must be, before all else a great school and an experimental laboratory), can, in case of war, bring into play vast weapons of destruction and of defence without difficulty. She therefore, while the continent of Europe is being disintegrated, enjoys a position which is truly imperial.

Healthy circulation, large reserves of gold, a favourable commercial balance-sheet, the fact of being creditor to all the Entente countries and of not having wished for any share in the spoils of Germany, whether territorial compensation or economic or financial compensation, place America in a position of such great prestige that she can without impediment and without resistance impose a policy of peace. Her intervention and even her attitude alone are regarded in Europe as factors of such great importance that they are either feared or desired, according to the different condition of the politics of each particular country. In all democratic countries no really effective policy is possible unless public opinion demands it, and, to a certain extent, enforces it. This is particularly true of the United States, where the powers of the President and of the Secretary of State are strictly limited by the constitution, which endows the Senate not merely with a control over the foreign policy and treaties, but even with a share in the shaping of them.

America is, morally, in a difficult position in the eyes of Europe, as being responsible for the peace-treaties, and therefore for the reparations and the system of military occupation. The great bulk of the American public, however, does not know the truth, nor does the press always do what it can to enlighten it. The American public, when it knows the truth, when it knows that the great effort put forward to destroy by war the danger of imperialism has resulted only in the creation of another and much more depraved imperialism, will be overcome

with indignation. Those who sent their sons to fight in Europe, and who contributed the powerful aid of their organisation and their riches, certainly did not aim at such objectives. America cannot remain an indifferent spectator of the ruin of Europe without injuring herself and losing prestige. No nation lives merely on material benefits, and no amount of wealth is equal in value to the dignity of a nation or to the respect which it inspires in other nations.

The American public, therefore, must know the truth. Its sane idealism and its traditional practical common-sense will enable it to discover the most efficacious and most suitable method of intervention. For that reason I dare not give any advice, not only because I have no authority to give advice to the American people, but also because all advice which comes from Europe is received with suspicion, even if it comes from one who, like myself, has always followed the same way of life, has always had the same ideas, and has always laboured for peace at the cost of sacrifice and loss of every kind. Yet there is one piece of advice which I would like to give to those in America who interest themselves in defending the fortunes of civilisation—which is, to spare no effort in the dissemination of the truth, and to help it to permeate the masses. I have noted with satisfaction that some of the most widely-circulated papers, such as the *Chicago Tribune* and the Hearst newspapers, have published broadcast information about the cruelties which have been perpetrated on the Rhine, have described the wrongs committed by the armies of occupation, and have begun to point out what French militarism really means, and what are the aims in Europe of those who talk about a reparations policy—which would be better described as a policy aiming at disruption and violence.

Truth! truth! All those who know the truth and respect it must disseminate it widely. It is not true that the

Germans hacked the hands off Belgian babies during the war merely from a spirit of malevolence; and this truth must be told. But it is true that the armies of occupation on the Rhine aimed at bringing the Germans into servitude during the peace. It is true that the Germans, during the war, stained themselves with the murder of Miss Cavell; but it is also true that the French and the Belgians, during the peace, violated German territory in despite of the treaties, and entered the Ruhr to beat and chastise free citizens; that they tried them and condemned them to death, against all the laws of decency sacred to free peoples, and against all international conventions, merely because they obeyed the laws of their country. It is true that many Germans had imperialistic ideas and programmes before the war; but it is also true that the France of Poincaré, instead of disarming since the war, has built up a very large army and air-force, and has aimed at the domination of the whole of Europe.

Truth! truth! All these things must be said, in such a way that not only the men more directly responsible for political programmes, but also the great mass of the public, may be permeated with facts, and that widely diffused and artfully maintained prejudices may vanish as soon as possible. When that stumbling-block has been removed, America's political activities will be made manifest, spontaneous and forcible.

America has always endeavoured to exert her influence towards the avoidance or limitation of international conflicts. Wilson's idea of a League of Nations was a very noble one; and if the institution which arose from those ideas was not a good one, it was because it was planned at Paris, at a time when the Treaty of Versailles was being prepared, at a time when the forces of disruption, and not those of reconstruction, were being brought to bear. It is now a very difficult thing to

reconstitute the League of Nations with American support. Since the decision about Upper Silesia, since the immoralities committed in the Saar, the League of Nations is so much discredited that those who are its members strive to make use of it only for their own ends, abandoning its decisions when they think it opportune to do so. In addition, the proposals set forward during the Geneva Conference about arbitration and mutual guarantees, if they serve to guarantee the Treaty of Versailles and the other treaties which depend on it, tend to give the League of Nations a character utterly opposed to that which it was intended to have.

Some time ago Lord Robert Cecil travelled in the United States to propagate the idea of a League of Nations, and he gave his impressions of the antipathy of the Americans in an article in the *New York Times*. In spite of appearances, the greater part of the Americans have a profoundly conservative spirit, and regard all novelties, especially in foreign politics, with great aversion. None the less, the objections which the Americans brought before Lord Robert, and which he discussed in his article, are full of truth and wisdom. Is not the League of Nations a super-state? Would not participation in it involve America in a defence of the injustices created by the treaties? Would not Article 10 of the pact of the League of Nations constrain the United States to participate in European wars in which she has no interest? Someone also asked Lord Robert: "Is it true that Europe is a prey to wars which have broken out, or which will break out, since the creation of the League of Nations?" Lord Robert replied to these objections with a certain amount of humour, but it cannot be denied that humour is part of the American character.

President Harding, in a message to the American Senate, announced the idea of a Permanent Court of International Justice, and forwarded the letter addressed

to him on this subject by the Secretary of State, Mr. Hughes. It was an indirect way of finding a substitute for the League of Nations, and the nobility of the aim and the serious nature of its conception cannot be gainsaid.

The aversion which the suggestion of a Permanent Court of International Justice has encountered is due to the fact that the League of Nations has been too unfortunate an experiment not to have diffused a spirit of mistrust.

Senator Lewis, on returning from Europe, declared that the League of Nations was "a league of the victors to hold the booty." An American newspaper of wide circulation remarked, when reporting this opinion, that one might also add that it was "a league of the conquerors to extend their war-booty by fresh aggressions." The Saar, Upper Silesia, and the Ruhr perhaps justify this bitter estimate, but it must be added that almost the whole of the responsibility for the politics of the continent of Europe lies at the door of the France of Poincaré, Barthou, and Millerand.

The thing essential to the peace of the world and the termination of the present reign of force is not that a judicial body, even though possessed of the highest authority, should be erected to settle disputes which may arise in the future, but that the present conflicts should be eliminated. Reparations have up till now been a pretext for oppressing and dismembering Germany, and for keeping formidable armies on foot. The France of Poincaré, in order to realise its imperialist programme, claimed that the question of reparations, and therefore of failure to pay them, should be settled by the Reparations Commission, which since the retirement of America and the isolation of Great Britain (who has preferred to hold aloof) has become a partisan organisation and not a tribunal of justice. France claimed also that, when non-fulfilment of the reparations clauses had been declared,

she could invade any part of Germany's territory, try civilians before her own military tribunals, and dispose of their life and their goods. She considered the invaded territories (*i.e.* the men) as pledges, that is to say, as things. She hoped, by means of the most efficient army in the world, and by means of an air-force more powerful than that of all the other countries of Europe put together, to annex directly or indirectly, or at least to cut off from their fatherland, either at once or later on, twelve million Germans, after dismembering the whole of Germany and dividing it into five or six states. For a long time she hoped to accomplish these objectives by means of the Reparations Commission, without any obstacle, or, indeed, with the complicity of the League of Nations, on the lines of what happened to Upper Silesia and the Saar.

Herriot himself has made all kinds of reservations about the right of France to occupy the Ruhr and other districts not included in the treaty. How can such reservations inspire confidence?

What functions, in any case, could a Permanent Court of Justice fulfil? Would it be able to take the place, not only of the League of Nations, but also of the Reparations Commission? Its efficacy could be believed in only if it completely replaced these bodies, and if, together with the participation of America, it could concern itself not only with what will happen, but also with what has happened and with what is happening. Since, however, this cannot take place unless France first renounces her programme and the greater absurdities of the treaties and all the errors which have been made in interpreting them, we must first know what force will induce France to abandon her programme. Otherwise all discussion is barren, and every new institution for administering justice must either participate in injustice, or, if it pretends to be ignorant of the injustice, must lose all credit from the very beginning.

Montesquieu, in words full of profound wisdom, remarks that it is eternally true that every man who has power tends to abuse it, and uses it up to the point at which he finds a limit. The same thing can be said of a nation which has been victorious. There are forces which make all wise moderation difficult after a victory, and the victor often goes too far and provokes new wars. France has gone too far, and has prepared a series of economic collapses which are now affecting the victors and also neutrals, and has laid the foundations of a large number of revolutions and wars. Is it possible that she will find her limits even now? Could the concerted action of the United States and Great Britain mark a limit? All other considerations are useless, and every institution which arises before a limit has been put to the acts of France is necessarily barren.

For America to decide to bring action to bear on Europe three things are necessary. The first is for her to be convinced that it is her duty to intervene; the second is for her to be persuaded that she has an interest in intervention, and the third is for her to decide, with calm resolution, that her intervention will not drag her into adventures outside her own boundaries, and that she will be able to achieve the practical and efficacious results which she sets before herself.

No words of peace, however authoritative, will be able to check the errors of European politics unless forces derived from the alignment of American and British policy and from their joint action are brought to bear in the most effective form possible. *The French Government, having fed its people with illusions, cannot check itself in its career of violence unless the public exasperation of the world justifies it in doing so.* Herriot himself has given proof of this by continuing to defend, at least in appearance, the absurd claim that France has a right to occupy fresh German territory, and by allowing

representatives of the French Government on the Reparations Commission to talk of an almost indefinite duration of the occupations.

Has America the moral duty to intervene in favour of subjugated peoples who were deceived by the mirage of Wilson's propositions and tormented by the reparations policy?

It must always be borne in mind that when Germany surrendered, military resistance was still possible for her, if only she had shortened her vast military front. She capitulated because two causes of depression were overpowering her. The first, and the more terrible, was famine; the second was Wilson's programme, which sapped her moral resistance and the unity of her national sentiment. From the moment when, according to the formal and solemn declarations of Wilson, who spoke in the name of the American people, America and her associates did not wish to consider themselves at war with the German people, but only with German imperialism, what was the use of draining the energies of the German people in a vain adventure which was regarded with aversion by the whole world? Were not both victors and vanquished to lay down their arms and refer their controversies to a League of Nations, in which all nations were to be respected to an equal degree? When Germany had restored Alsace and Lorraine, and had assisted in the formation of a Poland from people who were indisputably Poles, had she anything to fear?

The Treaty of Versailles was signed by Wilson and his principal colleagues. Now these men represented America, and they pledged themselves in the eyes of America and of the world. Even if the American Senate rejected the treaty by an act of political wisdom, and declined to know anything about the League of Nations and of military guarantees in favour of France, that did not detract from the fact that the pledge existed, and still

exists, if not legally, at least morally, in the eyes of the world. As the German people surrendered on the basis of a pledge of which America was a principal guarantor, how can it be said that the responsibility of the American nation finished with the vote of the Senate?

There is a still more serious factor, and one which will be the object of the deepest consideration in America, viz., the special responsibility of the United States in the sphere of the reparations.

All those who concern themselves with politics and who understand finance now know what a vast trick the reparations have been. They know that the France of Poincaré claimed that Germany should pay what she could not pay, solely in order that the organ of France, the Reparations Commission, should have the chance of declaring that Germany had not fulfilled her agreements, and that therefore there should be an opportunity for using force in order to suffocate her and divide her. When the question of European war-debts was being discussed, Senator Borah declared that America was interested in the question of reparations, firstly on account of the payment of the sums which Europe owed her, and secondly in order that European markets should be able to be kept open to American trade. There is, however, a higher interest at stake—that the United States should keep to their promise, because a great nation cannot break its word without assuming terrible responsibilities in the face of history and of God.

There is not only the responsibility for the treaty; there is also the special responsibility for the system of reparations and for its application.

The Reparations Commission, which morally ended with the formulation of the Dawes Plan, but which, to the shame of international relations, still insists on existing, was instituted as a supreme arbiter. At the time when there was disagreement as to the amount of the indemnity

(improperly styled reparations for damage done), too big a demand would have seemed absurd even to those who presented it. It was therefore thought that an impartial commission might contain stable elements of opinion and also be a guarantee for the debtor. Thus the Reparations Commission was instituted.

The reason why Germany accepted the treaty, and therefore also the Reparations Commission (which had sovereign powers), was because America, who was a guarantee of disinterested motives and equanimity to everyone, formed part of it. America had renounced all share in economic advantages, indemnities, and compensation, and remained as a quiet judge of events.

When, after the rejection of the treaty by the Senate, America withdrew, the whole basis of the contract was annulled. The Commission transformed itself arbitrarily into a political commission, which, through holding its sessions at Paris, was bound to undergo the pressure of a public opinion excited by a mirage which was perhaps unattainable, but which was all the more alluring. The more disinterested part of the commission withdrew, and the presidential chair, the occupant of which inspires the whole work of the commission and has a decisive vote on some important questions, was filled by the representative of France, who had clearly outlined the programme which was to be carried out. This president, moreover, the representative of France, manifested the most extreme ideas about disruption and the continuation of the war by means of the peace-treaties. For some time the chair was filled by Poincaré himself, and afterwards by Barthou—that is to say, by the extremists of the programme of ruin and strife. Belgium, not having an independent policy of her own, had of necessity to follow France. Some other countries nominated as their representatives men endowed with extreme mediocrity or absolute ignorance.

This change overturned the basis of the contract. If I am in debt to someone and the amount of my debt is in dispute, if I have agreed to accept the findings of a board of arbitrators whom I consider impartial, and if I have particular confidence in the most authoritative of the arbitrators, whose disinterestedness inspires me with confidence, the withdrawal of this arbitrator cancels the whole basis of the agreement. My pledge is null and void, because the fundamental conditions of the contract have been altered. Now, after the withdrawal of America, the Reparations Commission was no longer a board of arbitrators; it was merely an organisation for carrying out the policy of France. Great Britain, in fact, either did not participate in the most serious decisions, or abstained from voting. The invasion of the Ruhr, which had been depicted as a small technical expedition of engineers and experts on coal-mines, was transformed, through the medium of the Reparations Commission, into the most alarming and unjust expedition recorded in modern history, and caused, or will cause, the most serious events of our time.

No redress for oppression is possible, except by an appeal to the public opinion of the world. The moral factors in the life of nations often work slowly, but they work none the less. Even if the French politicians of the intransigent nationalistic school are now covered by the Reparations Commission, which has made them at one and the same time irresponsible when faced with folly and rash when faced with error, the true character of this great blunder is beginning to reveal itself in all its might.

The public opinion of the world will declare that America is to a large extent responsible for the invasion of the Ruhr, for the crimes which took place there, and for the greatest outrage committed for some centuries upon the property and inhabitants of an unarmed country

attacked in time of peace. Germany, too, violated and tortured through the medium of the military organisation which the Reparations Commission has now become, will declare that the agreement was annulled when the arbitrator, in fact the super-arbitrator, left her post. The political and moral responsibility of America is, therefore, most terrible, and the great American democracy cannot, without injuring itself, refuse to take an interest in what is happening.

Has America the right to interfere?

It is easy to understand that America does not wish to get entangled in the numberless controversies which are agitating and tormenting the life of Europe, and that she does not wish to intervene until it is possible for her action to obtain big results and until her efforts can be really effective. She alone can decide the manner and the time of intervention. It is certain that any renunciation of credits, any participation in responsibilities, any financial intervention, unless accompanied by a guarantee that the treaties would be revised and by a certainty that a real contribution would be made to the cause of peace, would be not only a useless sacrifice but a source of real harm.

Has America any interest in intervention?

When problems of high moral responsibility are being discussed, and when the future of civilisation itself is at stake, economic questions are of much less importance. Never, however, were economic interests and moral duty in such complete harmony as in this case.

From the very beginning America has not felt the privation which Europe has felt, or has felt it to a very limited degree.

There was even a feeling of relief among many manufacturers at seeing Germany banned from the world's markets: there were so many positions to seize, so many situations to occupy. The internal consumption of so

rich a country could absorb without difficulty the increased output. It was believed that production could be developed without obstacles, and a crisis avoided, by limiting immigration and increasing the home consumption. This opinion was even set forth authoritatively by one or two of President Harding's colleagues.

Facts, on the contrary, have taken it upon themselves to show in the plainest manner that America, with all her powers of development and of economic production, cannot withdraw from that international economic solidarity which is the characteristic of modern civilisation, in agricultural output above all others. Europe still is, and will long remain, the greatest market of consumers in the world; and the collapse of Central Europe, which was the centre of the greatest activity, even if it serves the imperialist programme of France, can result in nothing but the disorganisation of the world's commerce.

The illusion about Asiatic markets has to a large extent disappeared. It is not true that Japan, China and India can take the place, if only in part, of Europe. Their market is of small size, and can develop only slowly and with great difficulty. Since the war, exports to Asia have declined instead of increasing, and Asia does not represent for America a market equal to Great Britain, or even one of half its size. The whole of China, which has more than four times as many inhabitants as the United States, is less important to the American export trade than Holland alone, which has a population a little less than that of Illinois. Indeed, Holland alone is more important than China and India together—that is to say, its seven million inhabitants have more effect on American trade than the seven hundred and fifty million inhabitants of Asia. A single Dutchman buys many more American products than a hundred Asiatics. Asiatic commerce, having lost its European export markets,

tends to diminish, and is limiting its imports. The same thing is happening in the case of South America, and to an even more remarkable extent; South American commerce is passing through a profound crisis, which began on the day when it lost a great part of its European markets. If Germany is not buying coffee, grain and tobacco from Brazil, how can Brazil buy from the United States and England? People in Germany are dying from starvation as a result of the reparations policy, and there is a shortage of sheets in the hospitals. Yet in America, when the crops are normal, grain and cotton are threatened with a severe crisis because they cannot find buyers. France is not paying her debts to the United States, and yet, up to the present, has persisted in demanding stupidly large sums from Germany. Germany's credit has collapsed, but Europe's commerce has been ruined with it. Just before the war, in the financial year 1913-14, America's total exports amounted to 2364 million dollars. Great Britain alone bought to the extent of 594·2 of these millions, and Germany 344 millions. Germany, Great Britain and Holland, which had the best business conditions and the greatest trade of all the countries of Europe, bought little less than two-fifths of the total exports of the United States. Trade during the war, and even for a year or so after the war, was essentially political. As America did not trade with enemy or ex-enemy states, she gave large credits to the allied powers, with which they were able to make purchases in the American market. But now that the war is over, the natural conditions of trade tend to re-establish themselves; and as America cannot grant fresh credits to those who do not pay their old debts and who are increasing their military expenditure, American trade is being struck at the very source of its prosperity.

The France of Poincaré and of the iron and steel interests has, up to the present, made three absurd

claims—that Germany, after having lost her greatest resources, should support the cumbersome and costly armies of occupation; that she should be surrounded by customs barriers and submit to various kinds of control, which are disorganising her production; and that at the same time she should pay big reparations. This policy has succeeded only in bringing disruption, but is also paralysing the world's activities.

The American crisis is beginning to show itself in the most alarming manner. Many industries have undoubtedly increased their output through the collapse of Germany and the disordered state of Europe. Some, indeed, cannot even supply the numerous demands of their customers. This, however, refers to a limited number of industries, and a decline is beginning to make itself felt in all the others. Many bankers feel a time of difficulty and of crisis approaching, and many politicians have sounded a note of alarm. An unexpected and terrible state of things is coming to pass, in that the crisis is hitting the most deserving class in North America, that which includes the sanest elements in the population, the farmers and farm labourers.

Before the war, that part of America's agricultural output which was not needed for home consumption went chiefly to Europe, and more particularly to Great Britain and Germany. It was Britain's industrial products and carrying-trade which enabled it to buy American produce. Germany received almost solely from the Ruhr the productions necessary to pay each year, especially in America, for the supplies essential to make up for her deficient output of foodstuffs.

In peace and in war the agricultural population is the backbone of the nation. It stands for stability, continuity, and strength. During the European war the element of strength was supplied by the peasants. They were patient, tenacious, and resisted fatigue. It is the country

districts which feed the cities and supply them with their best elements. The turbid, restless, changeable life of cities exhausts a great deal of energy; the country renews it. In time of peace the peasantry are in general the most stable, most honest, and most conservative element of the population; and in war they are the most tenacious element. The disorganisation of the life of the countryside means a diminution of the whole energy of the nation. Now the agriculture of North America cannot send the greater part of its exports anywhere else than to Europe, nor can it substitute other markets in the place of Europe. Every movement of the French army on the Ruhr, every act of violence in Bavaria, every attempt at separation on the Rhine, not only damages Europe profoundly, but also ruins the position of hundreds of thousands of American farmers. The policy of reparations in Europe is certain to damage the life of the Continent, and also to strike at the prosperity of American life, by disorganising the energies of that class which is most important for the future of the United States.

Senator Borah, of Idaho, has sounded a note of alarm which has been widely re-echoed. Many voices have arisen to draw attention to the great danger which is being revealed. Every abandoned farm means an injury to the whole American nation, and every family forced to abandon its fields and retire to the congested cities is a menace to the economic equilibrium of America. According to Senator Borah two million people abandoned the American countryside in 1922 and took their way to the cities, and three million people followed their example in 1923. This has happened in all the agricultural states of the Union, north, south, east and west.

Basil M. Manly has asserted that the exodus from the American countryside in 1922 was so great that it exceeded the population of the six states of Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. In an

article contributed to the *La Follette Magazine* he gave expression to his feelings of anxiety.

These feelings are shared by all in America, especially by those who represent agriculture; and the most striking thing about them is that the states of the Centre and West, which were most hostile to any interest in matters connected with European politics, are now the most anxious. The existence of a large quantity of unsold products reacts not only on that part of them which is destined for exportation, but also on that destined for home trade, and provokes a fall of prices and a state of crisis which in turn threaten the American farmers. This situation must of necessity get worse, because the purchasing power of European countries will diminish still further on account of reparations. Thus the armies of various states which are humiliating European civilisation on the Rhine, and the army of occupation which has destroyed the laws of justice and of civilisation and has violated treaties by invading the Ruhr, have not marched only against Europe, but also against the prosperity of America. In America, therefore, all are beginning to ask themselves: Why is it that France, who is not paying her debts, or even the interest on her debts, is maintaining against an unarmed enemy the greatest army in the world and the greatest military air-force that has ever existed? Where does she want to go? And what does she want?

A great American financier wrote to me some months ago that a crisis would not be long in revealing itself, and that only then would America take an interest in European questions. I do not think that he will have long to wait.

Is it, then, America's duty to intervene?

There is no possible doubt about the moral duty of the United States. But is it in America's interest to intervene? No one who has the least knowledge of

economic phenomena has any reason to doubt it. The only question is to know *in what form and at what time* America will think it right to intervene effectually.

Now this question is too delicate to be dealt with by a foreign politician. Not only have I no authority to deal with it, but even if I had I would take great care not to express an opinion.

What the free peoples of the whole world and the peoples oppressed by the tragic blunder of the reparations expect before anything else from America is a firm and resolute attitude on the questions which chiefly concern humanity. If it is still possible to save the superlative gifts of civilisation from the advancing waves of barbarism, it is only on one condition—that the public opinion of the world shall not remain indifferent in face of those waves, which are advancing in turbid and threatening succession.

In April 1922 I forwarded to the Dutch Congress of the Society for the Propagation of Moral and Democratic Politics a message in which I formulated certain proposals which I consider necessary before the work of reconstruction can be begun. These proposals may be summed up in the following points:

1. *To fight against armaments* and to consider as uncivilised any act which aims at extending them; not to grant any confidence, therefore, or any credit to those nations which enlarge their armies or increase their munitions without justification. Such nations can aim only at conquest, annexation of fresh territory, dismemberment of the vanquished, acquisition of raw materials, or the appropriation of other people's goods. The mere fact that the countries under French control (Belgium, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Jugoslavia) have frequently armed themselves without necessity limits all development of other nations, is a menace to peace, and creates fresh hatreds

2. *To put an end to the military occupations* sanctioned by the treaties, and to those carried out in opposition to the treaties. The experience of the past few years has shown that they have not served in the least to guarantee the payment of indemnities to the victors, and that they merely serve to disorganise the life of the vanquished and to humiliate them. It has also shown that these armies cost more than any army on a peace footing.

3. *To abandon the policy of reparations* which, up to the present, has been only a policy of disruption. Nothing injures output and trade more than injustice. The best reparations consist in the resumption of normal relations. The systematising of debts is a condition essential to the resumption of normal life.

4. *To rectify the most unjust clauses of the treaties* and, if not all, at least some of the greatest absurdities, such as the present position of Upper Silesia, of the Saar, of Galicia, and above all, of the Danzig corridor. The things which now represent Europe's greatest danger can be rectified by means of voluntary agreements or by means of a substantially reformed League of Nations. A modification is particularly essential in the case of Articles 5 and 10, which at present make the League nothing more than a Holy Alliance at the service of some of the victors. It is obvious that Europe will never have peace unless the treaties are revised, and that she will have to pass through an uninterrupted series of revolutions and of military and proletarian dictatorships, according to the varying fortunes of the contending parties locked in deadly strife.

5. *To re-establish equality of tariffs between victors and vanquished* to the end that every country may be free to adopt those forms of trade which it considers most adapted to its own development. At the present time the inequality is so great that Germany must accord the conquerors "most favoured nation" treatment, but

without reciprocity. On the other hand all states are raising customs barriers against Germany, from whom they are demanding reparations which she cannot pay unless she increases her foreign trade—a thing which the treaties prohibit. According to the Treaty of Versailles, cheating in commerce is forbidden to the defeated countries, who are not allowed to make use of any trade subterfuge. This practice is reserved as a privilege of the victors, who, by an unprecedented cynicism, reserved to themselves even the liberty and monopoly of cheating in commerce. There must be a fundamental rule that every people, whether victor or vanquished, shall be free in the arrangement of its customs duties. Every effort must be made to secure *a customs union of the European states*. A customs union is the only possible basis for an effective peace policy.

6. *To refuse all credit and all confidence* to those countries which trample on democratic institutions, abolish Parliaments, form military castes and organisations, and establish government by dictatorship. So long as a state of disorder lasts, so long as Parliamentary rights are left in abeyance and the popular will is not respected, no confidence must be accorded, and no loans advanced, whether to the state, to municipal corporations, or to private individuals. Otherwise, the granting of credits is a bad action and bad business at the same time.

7. *To prohibit the use of coloured troops against white races in time of peace.* The yellow, negroid, and black troops which France (for the first time in the history of European civilisation) has imported into Western Germany since the war do not humiliate the vanquished; they humiliate civilisation. International agreements must be made so that coloured troops must never be employed against peoples of higher race and civilisation in time of peace.

8. *To fight against militarism in all its forms.* Even if

an army is a guarantee of the internal liberty and the independence of every nation, militarism means degeneration of the most perilous kind. Militarism implies either the suppression of civil liberties by a military caste, which works on behalf of dynastic interests, or it implies reaction. It must always be remembered that militarism, financial disorder, nationalism, reaction, and antisemitism are closely related phenomena.

9. *To help all movements in the cause of liberty,* not only movements for the liberation of men and property, but also, and above all, movements for liberty of conscience and thought. These have been mankind's greatest achievements. They are the conditions of all true progress, and yet they have been severely attacked in many European countries since the war.

These fundamental principles of a moral and democratic policy can only be enforced by a great stirring of the world's opinion, which alone can secure a position of honour for the prerogatives of human life after all the violence and outbursts of hatred which have taken place. Only the firm pressure of American public opinion can supply the necessary impetus, especially if it acts jointly with the wholesome currents of opinion in Great Britain.

It is the fashion at present to despise democracy, and the insidious encroachments of the spirit of violence which is choking Europe are not meeting with sufficient aversion, even in America. There is much toleration—too much, in fact—for certain errors and aberrations because certain groups look on without antipathy at attempts at reaction. If, however, there is any wish for salvation, there must be a return to the principles which are the basis of our civilisation, and which were the basis of all prosperity.

After such a terrible war as the last, everyone has a feeling of anxiety and discomfort. Capitalism, after so

many changes of fortune, has lost a great part of its confidence in itself, and in many countries exists in its most degenerated form. Socialism, with its historic cycles, has lost much of its attractiveness. Communism, after its unfortunate experiments, has fallen into complete discredit. The dictatorships which have been erected in certain countries are shameful and ephemeral phenomena. A return to the principles of democracy and liberty can alone bring salvation.

I envisage the intervention of America under two heads—the action of public opinion, and the action of the powers of the state. The second cannot take place except by the pressure of the first; but public opinion, if expressed forcibly, suffices in itself to overturn even international policies. Open condemnation by American public opinion of Poincaré's policy of reparations and of militarist reaction would be received with expressions of sympathy on all sides. The antipathy of the whole world cannot be endured for long, and nations such as France, which are centres of old-established civilisation, cannot resign themselves to a state of being regarded with suspicion and mistrust.

When the Americans have convinced themselves that America is chiefly responsible for what is happening, and that that which is happening is not merely ruining Germany, but is damaging the whole world and undermining American prosperity, when they ask certain European countries for an explicit explanation of the new armaments, when they demand the repayment of their credits and declare their firm determination to stop every fresh act of violence, then there will be liberated a mighty force which will allow the democratic elements in France to react, more than they can to-day, against the unjust violence of the supporters of destruction, who have found in the reparations a method to justify their plan of conquest and their incomprehensible

dreams of domination. Identity of outlook and of interests undoubtedly exists between Great Britain and the United States. They both desire real peace and liberty, and security of trade—two things which the imperialist elements in France, Poincaré and the iron and steel interests, cannot desire, in that they paralyse their policy and impede their programme. Great Britain has put forth very great efforts. During the war, she alone for a long time made it her work to help everyone—France, Russia, Italy and Belgium. She guaranteed the safety of the seas and starved Germany out. She sent her soldiers everywhere, improvised an enormous army, and undertook the most difficult tasks. Since the war, she has consistently laboured for peace. Ever since the first errors and agitations between November 1919 and March 1920—agitations which were not all spontaneous, but encouraged by that part of the press which supported the policy of France and financial interests—she has stood for moderation and has even stood out alone against the commission of great errors. She has imposed upon herself the greatest sacrifices, she has declared her readiness for every renunciation; and she disarmed her troops even too rapidly, when compared with France, who was taking up arms. On such fundamental questions as Upper Silesia and the Ruhr she found herself alone in supporting an honest application of the treaties. Yet she has suffered the most tremendous disillusionment ever recorded in British history. She waged war, above all, in order that she might have that which, for an island state without agricultural resources, is more an essential to life than an essential to power—the freeing of the seas from the peril of a German fleet ever growing more powerful. Yet on the morrow of the war, when her merchant-fleet was lying idle because the peace-treaties had stifled trade between the nations, when she was losing many of her markets and was acquiring German

markets only to a small degree, because the dishonest application of the peace-treaties had curtailed the purchasing power of all the nations on earth, she began to lose all security on the seas. The France of Poincaré and the iron and steel interests began to develop not only her army but also her air-force, her weapons of chemical warfare, and her submarines, without any necessity, at a time when she was faced with unarmed foes. Thus she constituted a danger infinitely greater than the much less formidable and insidious German fleet had been.

In the present state of the world, only the United States and Britain, especially if linked in common effort, can prevent the swift approach of ruin and the passing of European civilisation.

America, with much sagacity, has declined to renounce her credits. There is even an Act of Congress which prevents the executive from making any such renunciation. It has been said that the war was a common undertaking for common ends, and that there is no reason for separating the financial contribution from the human contribution; that France and Italy supplied chiefly men, and the United States the sinews of war. That is true, but it is also true that the United States, and Great Britain in particular, contributed their men, and that Britain's enormous number of dead contributed to the victory. They have the power to renounce their credits, but only in the interests of peace, when the question of reparations has been definitely settled, and when the most serious injustices of the treaties can be rectified. I even think that, during the interval, America should not only not renounce anything, but even *increase her mistrust.* If the debts of France and Italy can find their liquidation only in the sphere of reparations, it is all the more legitimate for America to intervene effectively after the disasters which have followed the policy of reparations.

Those American states which were most opposed to

taking any interest in European questions are those which are now most threatened by the agrarian crisis and the exodus of the farmers to the cities. Their representatives, who often exaggerated Monroe's doctrines, now see the harm which has resulted from consenting to France's policy of imperialism, which has produced a world-crisis and threatens us with even more terrible wars than before.

The great American political parties have, up to the present, preferred not to speak of European questions. The state of public opinion indicated the necessity of a prudent reserve. But public opinion will now expect the parties to express clearly their programme on the most essential questions. How will it be possible to prevent the imperialist and reactionary parties in France from causing a vast economic crisis throughout the world as a result of Germany's collapse? How will it be possible to prevent the policy of armaments, especially of such insidious weapons of war as aeroplanes, explosives and submarines, from dragging the world into wars of unprecedented ferocity? How will it be possible to terminate the policy of reparations and to eliminate the armies of occupation? Will it be possible to trust in the League of Nations by changing its constitution, or will it be necessary to discover organisations of greater efficacy?

It is necessary for the most authoritative leaders of American politics to express their opinion on these points, and it is no less necessary for the parties which aim at directing the policy of the United States to make a clear statement as to their programmes.

Fortunately, America has taken away all illusions from those people in Europe who for a long time beguiled themselves by talking the language which was spoken during the preparation of the Treaty of Versailles, and for five years afterwards during its application. The expressions of President Coolidge, who succeeded Harding,

the declarations of Hughes, even during his journey through Europe, and the language of the leading senators, all now point in the same direction. America has no intention of renouncing any of her credits, or even of discussing any financial intervention, so long as the peril of new wars and the systems adopted by conquerors continue in Europe.

America rightly prefers to develop her internal resources, and to abandon much of her European trade, rather than assume any responsibility. There is a sense of legitimate self-defence in her attitude of mistrust. There is also a sense of concern which is sometimes exaggerated, but which is justified by the fact that she took part in a European war. The fact that not only big European nations, but also little ones, are declaring themselves imperialists and nationalists must make the Americans smile, but at the same time it increases their diffidence. Confidence is as contagious as diffidence. If so many countries of Europe are proclaiming themselves nationalist, it is natural that the birth or re-birth of xenophobe associations, which base all their actions on violence, should be possible in America. America has reduced her immigration to a remarkable degree. She has reduced it almost to nothing in the case of Italy, Russia and the inhabitants of the former Austria-Hungary, and absolutely to nothing in the case of Japan. Why? Is it merely a racial matter? I do not think so. America does not wish to increase her output too much. Why should she increase it if she is not sure of her export markets? Economic mistrust is a platform well adapted to ethnical mistrust. When one does not want production one begins to discredit it. If America to-morrow had great need of workmen, even ethnical prejudices would fall in a flash. But America, who, during the war, saw the danger, or at least the harm, of having within her borders many representatives of different races not yet absorbed within

the national ideal, has become mistrustful when faced with the mistrust of all the countries of Europe. On the other hand, America acquired every year about a million men from Europe, solely in order to be able to sell some hundreds of millions more merchandise; if this is not possible, she prefers not to have men to upset her labour market unnecessarily. This economic solidarity has once more acted in all its might.

Among the declarations from America there is one which has particularly struck me by its gravity. It came from Robert L. Owen, Democratic Senator of the State of Oklahoma. At the session of 19th February, 1924, Senator Owen presented a resolution to the Washington Senate, proposing an inquiry as to the responsibility for the world-war, and the publication of all authentic material on the origin of the war. All the methods of the inquiry are set out in the resolution. Moreover, when Senator Owen presented it he made an important speech, to which the European Press has wrongfully not given sufficient prominence, and in which he already furnished a series of documents which show clearly that Germany alone was not responsible, and also that perhaps she was not even chiefly responsible. Senator Owen is, as they say in America, a hundred-per-cent. American, and descends from Redskins and from old Anglo-Saxon stock. He cannot, therefore, be attacked with the so frequent accusation of being either pro-French or pro-German by origin.

An inquiry as to war responsibility is certainly necessary: sooner or later it must be made. The vast stratagem contained in Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles cannot last: the whole truth must be told. It is not merely a question of a moral stratagem, but of a vast falsification of the truth, based on big capitalist interests. If there are armies of occupation in Germany which are working for the ruin of the Germans, if misdeeds have been

possible in the Saar, in the Ruhr, and in Upper Silesia, if the Reparations Commission has been able to function up to the present as the unworthy and servile organ of French iron and steel interests and of a policy of disruption, this has only been possible on the basis of the historical and moral falsehood contained in Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles. Not only has Lloyd George now recognised this falsehood, but all honest men, even if they signed the Treaty of Versailles, are beginning to feel the moral worthlessness of a declaration which is at variance with truth and which has been a pretext for plunder and violence.

The very fact that this proposal has been put forward in a great parliament and that it has been made for the first time by an American senator of the Democratic party constitutes a precedent which is certain to produce results. After the Conference of London, the German Chancellor, Dr. Max, made some statements on the subject of war responsibility which aroused many protests in France. Even Herriot protested, and Ramsay MacDonald himself spoke of the inopportuneness of this controversy.

I have been unable to convince myself that the truth about a matter of fundamental importance is inopportune. We want the truth to be spoken, whether it is inopportune or not. No truth is inopportune. It is only falsehood which is always not only inopportune, but wrong.

A fact which is interesting and noteworthy is that the language of Poincaré and his supporters, and certain exaggerations which are so frequent in a section of the English Press, together with all the illusions of the policy of violence, have been followed by a sincere and firm longing for peace. This longing is due chiefly to economic difficulties, and, above all, to moral difficulties.

Yet the paths which would lead to peace are the least used. A refusal to speak further on the question of war responsibility means a continuation of the deadlock. To

speak of a reduction of armaments when the causes of armaments still exist means failure to perceive the results of the hatred which has been disseminated. To deceive oneself with the belief that it is possible to consolidate the present disorder by means of pacts of guarantee (*i.e.* to make unjust partitions and unjust plunder cheaper) signifies a complete failure to understand the present dangers. The hope that Russia, Germany and, above all, the United States will join the League of Nations to guarantee the permanency of all its mistakes is a manifest and most injurious error. Germany may be induced to enter it with a bad grace and every kind of reservation; but the United States cannot enter it without losing prestige. Russia cannot sincerely enter it without first settling her territorial problems and her economic relations.

So far there have been many words and few facts put forward in the cause of peace. Nevertheless, even words have a positive significance and a real value in relationships between nations.

Europe must face the problem of her existence with quite different methods, and the new path which has to be followed has been laid down by necessity. What is necessary? The situation itself points out and commands what path is to be followed:

(1) to settle the whole question of reparations so as to terminate quickly all military occupations—and not as it has been settled by Barthou, for whom the period of occupation has not yet commenced;

(2) to restore to every country complete liberty, both at home and abroad, with freedom from control and interference;

(3) to pave the way for a customs union between the states of Europe;

(4) to rectify the most serious of the injustices perpetrated by the treaties;

(5) to prepare, with a sincere will to succeed, those

arrangements and reforms which can make the federation of the countries of Europe possible.

The first two points have no need for illustration. It is, however, as well to remark that the commencement of peace and resurrection cannot come except by the fall of customs barriers and the formation of a single market. Europe, which is little bigger than the United States and a little smaller than Canada, is paralysed in its every movement by the innumerable customs barriers, which have been made all the more rigid by new forms of Protection. Enormous quantities of wealth are annihilated every day. Monopolies of raw materials are formed with a view to economic domination which are, or ought to be, the basis of political domination. It was the formation of the German customs-union in 1833 which made the political union of Germany possible in 1871, in spite of the fact that its territory had been so much divided. The customs-union of all the countries of Europe can alone pave the way for the United States of Europe in a future which is perhaps not far distant. This idea may seem paradoxical after so many wars and so many explosions of hatred, but Europe has no other hope of salvation unless she realises this ideal.

The removal of the customs barrier between France and Germany would be sufficient to eliminate almost all the struggles for the monopoly of coal and iron. Freedom of trade would be sufficient to guarantee freedom of movement for men.

Italy has a very restricted territory, and yet has achieved unity only recently. Italy in the fifteenth century was divided into such an enormous number of states—often every city was a state—that anyone who had spoken, not of the political, but merely of the economic unity of Italy, would have been thought mad. The Italians of the fifteenth century hated each other more than the French and the Germans hate each other now.

Germany to-day, even though she has been unjustly mutilated, represents the largest ethnical unit in Europe, and the Germans are perhaps the largest national group in Aryan civilisation. It is folly to believe that torment and humiliation destroy the spirit of resistance of a great nation. It is a mistake to think that Germany will ever accept her present position. In a period of time not far removed, even if it be separated from us by cataclysms, Germany will resume her central position in the European continent. Her policy may be directed towards peace or towards destruction. Up to the present everything possible has been done to direct it to destruction.

The problem now is, how to press Germany towards peace, how to interest her in reconstruction, how to induce her to use her immense capacity for work and organisation in the service of life.

For this reason it is the special duty of Great Britain and France to set themselves the problem, not of a lying reduction of armaments, not of pacts of mutual guarantee in order to cut down expenditure, and not even of securing the maintenance of the *status quo*; but of eliminating the causes of conflict. This objective can be reached only through disarmament, customs-unions, and the revision of the treaties.

About forty years were necessary for the people of Germany to pass from a customs-union to a political union; Europe will perhaps need more time and a greater effort; but the sole harbour of salvation lies henceforward in that direction.

The forces of reaction and of capitalist sweaters are undoubtedly too powerful for anyone to hope that this tragic period of our history will pass away without fresh errors and fresh acts of violence.

The detestable class of war-profiteers is still too large, and parasitism of every form is still widespread.

I have been much impressed by reading what the

Indian reformer, Mahatma Gandhi, who in good faith supported the war against Germany, wrote after the war.

"The last war," he says, "has shown the satanic character of the civilisation which dominates Europe to-day. All the laws of public morality have been broken by the victors in the name of virtue. No lie has been considered too ignoble to be used. The motive of all the crimes which have been committed is grossly material."

That is true. The war-profiteers, speculators, and unscrupulous bankers who, before the war, contributed so greatly to the formation of a war-spirit, and who, during the war, gained immense and unmerited wealth, still continue in many countries to-day to poison the life of Europe and to drive the impoverished and bleeding continent towards a tragedy.

But the thinking men who have faced unpopularity, the men of feeling who have reacted against error to their own harm, find to-day an immense and ever-growing echo in the workmen of the factories and the labourers of the fields. The masses are moving, and will save the civilisation of Europe. The nameless masses are beginning to be horrified at violence and bloodshed, and are laying the foundations of the United States of Europe.

Nature's fairest works often arise after the greatest disasters, and the yearning for life is most keenly felt when the destruction has been greatest. The great masses of the people, who were dragged to death during the war, are beginning to hold aloof from hatred. A more intense longing for life is passing over people who only yesterday were blinded with hate.

We are still groping hesitatingly in a forest of prejudice and plunder. Often the path cannot be seen; and often, when it has been seen, it is lost to sight. We are walking by the obscure light of an uncertain moon: *quale per incertam lunam sub luce maligna est iter in silvis.* Yet the need for the sun has been made all the greater by the

uncertainty of this painful and difficult path. In the life of nations, the sun is represented by liberty, democracy, and peace; and the minds of millions of men who have suffered during and after the war are returning to their old ideals of humanity and goodness. Europe cannot hope for any salvation except from the feelings of the masses of her people, who are experiencing a revulsion from the intoxication of violence.

To put an end to the reparations policy, to abolish organisms of falsity such as the Reparations Commission, to abolish the armies of occupation, to revise the unjust treaties, to re-establish the rights of nations and the normal relationships of life, to prepare the ground for big economic unions and still bigger political unions—all this seemed absurd only yesterday. To-day peace is not yet a reality, but it is at least an aspiration of thinking men. It is a sentiment which is being diffused among the reawakening masses, who are the reservoir of all the energies of a nation and who represent power and life.

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